

TWENTY
S E R M O N S,

On the Doctrines and Truths of
THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH.

By J. PROUD.

[*Price Four Shillings*]

ST. R. M. O. N. S.

On the History and Spirit of

THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH

BY J. PROUD

(Price Four Shillings)

TWENTY
SERMONS,
ON THE
DOCTRINES AND TRUTHS
OF
THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH:

DELIVERED IN THE
New Jerusalem Temple,
BIRMINGHAM.

And now published by Subscription, at the
Request of the Society.

BY J. PROUD, N.H.M.

Et dixit sedens super throno, ecce nova omnia facio. APO. xxi. 5.
Nunc licet. E. S.

BIRMINGHAM,
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. BELCHER;
SOLD ALSO BY THE AUTHOR.

1792.

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SERMONS

ON THE
DOCTRINES AND TRUTHS

OF
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62

BY J. L. LLOYD, N.H.M.

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AND ALSO BY THE AUTHOR.

1792

DEDICATION.

WORTHY AND BELOVED BRETHREN,

THE NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH, IN
BIRMINGHAM;

FOR you the following discourses were composed, to you they were delivered, and by your request they are now published; therefore to you they are more peculiarly dedicated. The approbation they have met with from so judicious a society, gives me reason to hope they may be acceptable, and useful, to those who shall read them: and I am happy in having this opportunity of publicly acknowledging, how much satisfaction and pleasure I feel in possessing the

the good opinion and esteem, and above all, the AFFECTION, of that society, to which my private studies and public labors are particularly devoted.

Love to God and man is the essence of our religion; your love to God, I trust, is manifested by a regular life of piety and goodness, by a constant and zealous obedience to the holy commandments of the word; and your love to each other is evident to all. Harmony, unanimity, and peace, have been uninterruptedly preserved amongst us; and I believe I am justified in saying, that every real member loves his brethren as he loves himself. But your charity is not confined, will never be confined within the narrow limits of your own society; it does, and will extend to ALL MEN, near or distant, friend or foe, of whatever name or nation. If we love God,
we

we shall love our brother also; and every man, as a man, is OUR BROTHER.

You have received the doctrines and truths of the Lord's New Church ---in them you rejoice---but you look not down upon those who have not received them, with pride, contempt, or disaffection. No, you are taught to be humble, to esteem others better than yourselves, to be good, to be useful, and to devote your lives, your abilities, and all that you are and have, to the benefit of your fellow-men. SO LIVE, and YOU CAN BUT BE HAPPY!

In the discourses now submitted to your perusal, I trust you will find some additional edification and pleasure. What you heard from the pulpit, with an approbation so grateful to the author, you will, I hope, read in the closet with peculiar pleasure and satisfaction to your own minds. And so far as these humble endeavors
are

are made useful to yourselves, and to others, you will unite with me in giving the praise to the LORD JESUS alone, who is YOUR only God and MINE. To his divine protection and peculiar blessing I commend you--- to him MY PRAYERS are directed for YOUR HAPPINESS in time and eternity ---and to your service shall my time, and any talents I possess from the Lord, be willingly and cheerfully devoted.

Your affection and esteem will always be highly grateful to me; and your continuance in love, in use, and pure religion, will be the most pleasing proof that my poor labors are blessed. With the most cordial affection and esteem, I subscribe myself,

Your minister, your brother, and fellow servant to my power,

J. P.

BIRMINGHAM, Sept. 3, 1792-36.

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SERMON

SERMON I.

THE OFFERING OF THE WISE MEN;

OR,

LOVE, FAITH, AND OBEDIENCE, UNITED, THE ONLY
TRUE SACRIFICE.

MATT. ii. 11.

And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him
gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

THERE is no part of the holy word but what is full of instruction; every line of it is written for our advantage; the wisdom contained in it is inexhaustible; and eternity itself is too short for finite minds to fathom all its truths. We have been too much accustomed to confine ourselves to the mere *letter* of the word, and have not considered its internal and spiritual meaning; in consequence of which, some have entertained but very low ideas of that word, and others have established every kind of false doctrine upon it. Whereas, if it were understood in its true internal sense, it would then appear as it is; that is, as the word of the living

B

God,

God, full of wisdom and truth divine; and that every verse and line contains useful and heavenly instruction.

The *science of correspondence*, by which it is written, has long been unknown and hid from the minds of men, in consequence of that falsehood and evil which has so long prevailed, and so much abounded; but is in these last days opened again from the Lord, for the benefit and instruction of mankind. By that science we are led to understand that every word has a spiritual meaning; what that meaning is; and that where *natural* things are mentioned, *spiritual* things are signified. According to this science I intend to open the text before us.

We are told in the beginning of the chapter, that wise men came from the East to Jerusalem: the occasion of their journey was to find out that personage who was born King of the Jews. For they had seen his star in the East, and they came to worship him; and by this star they were directed to the very spot where Jesus was. That there actually were wise men who took that journey, and were so directed, we need not doubt; nor can we doubt their offering gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but then what is *spiritually* understood by all these circumstances, is the matter under consideration.

And, first, By wise men. Some have imagined that they were astronomers, well acquainted with the heavenly bodies, or the planetary system; and also with astrology, or the influence of those planets.

How

How far they might be acquainted with these sciences I will not pretend to say, but I am persuaded their wisdom extended much farther, and was of a superior nature; for true wisdom consists in the knowledge of divine things, such as respect the Almighty, spiritual truth, and what appertains to the soul and eternal life. And had they not been acquainted with this wisdom, they would not have taken so long a journey to worship the new-born, but despised Messiah. They had seen his star in the East, and which might direct their external sight; but they had also an internal view of his glory, and were illuminated by heavenly wisdom to know that Jesus was not only then to be born, but also that he was the Saviour, Redeemer, and God of mankind.

Could we suppose that mere astronomy or astrology would have influenced these men to take a journey of this length; to bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and to worship the Lord Jesus Christ? No, they were men of *spiritual wisdom*, influenced by divine truth, and impelled by love to offer the best sacrifice, to the God and Saviour of their souls, that they were capable of offering. And let us remember, that nothing less than a true knowledge of, and love to the Lord, can influence us to offer service and worship to him. It is said that they came from the *East*—By the East, when mentioned in the sacred scriptures, is meant most frequently the Lord himself, or the divine love and goodness of the Lord; because he is the sun of heaven, from

whom all spiritual heat and light proceed: and as our natural sun appears in the East, and is the fountain of all natural heat and light, hence the Lord is thus spiritually represented. Therefore the meaning is, that these men came from the East, or were principled in and directed by the divine love and wisdom of the Lord their God. And by *this* we are taught to understand, that heat and light, or love and wisdom from the Lord, can alone make us truly wise and really good, and qualify us to offer an acceptable sacrifice unto him.

An ignorant and blind worship cannot be acceptable to the Lord, nor any service which has not *pure love* for its origin and source. Therefore it becomes us to study the doctrines and truths of his holy word, to make ourselves acquainted with the Lord, his character, perfections, his salvation, and the laws of his kingdom, that in consequence of this knowledge we may love and worship him. For the one great cause why the Lord Jesus Christ is not acknowledged as God alone, nor loved, or served, is that men remain ignorant of him, his true character, nature, and government. And let us be assured that when, like these wise men, we are under the influence of *love* and *wisdom*, we shall willingly offer up every sacrifice and service to the Lord, we are capable of offering.

But behold the consummate hypocrisy and deceit of Herod the King. "He called the wise men privately, and inquired of them what time the star appeared? and said, Go and search dili-

" gently

“gently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. But they were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod. And the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt; for Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him.”

So far was this ungodly King from desiring to worship the Lord, that his real design was to take away his life. But we will proceed to notice the words of our text:—“And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

I shall, in the first place, explain the spiritual meaning of these words.

Secondly, Prove that they comprehend every thing that we can render unto the Lord.

Thirdly, Inforce the necessity of presenting this offering, with the advantages we shall derive therefrom.

And, first, I am to explain the spiritual sense of the words.

One part of the treasure the wise men offered, is said to be *gold*. This valuable mineral, or metal, is frequently mentioned in the word of the Lord, and that it signifies something more than the metal itself, must be evident to the most superficial ob-

server. Thus the altar, the pillars, the vessels, &c. of the temple, were pure gold. And Psa. xxi. 3. "For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." Psa. xlv. 9, "Upon thy right-hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir." Isa. lx. 6, "They shall bring gold, and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord." And, ver. 17, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron," &c. Lam. iv. 1, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" And, Rev. iii. 18, the Lord says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." xxi. 18, "The city was pure gold, like unto clear glass."

By all these passages we plainly see material gold is not meant, but something spiritual, corresponding thereunto. In the highest sense of the word, *gold* means the celestial principle of divine love and goodness, which is in the Lord; and, when applied to men, as in our text, it signifies the highest principle of *love* and *goodness*, in the mind of man. So the wise men of the East, who had received the influx of divine love from the Lord into their will, offered *unto* the Lord their highest affection and love; consistent with that first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength."

This *love* may fitly be compared to *gold*, and represented by it. Inasmuch as gold is the most pure, useful,

useful, and valuable metal on earth; so love, pure genuine love to God, is the most *pure, useful, and valuable* grace, or virtue, that can dwell in the mind of man. What is *all* religion, without love? why a mere empty sound. What is all religious worship, or service, without love? why mere hypocrisy and dissimulation. *Love* is the very soul of religion, worship, service, and obedience. So the *wise men*, that is, all who are taught of God, and are truly wise, offer *gold* unto the Lord. All their affections are given up to him, and to him alone. They worship him in *love*—serve him in *love*—keep his commandments in *love*—do all that they do in *love*—and this is a part of that treasure which they cheerfully dispense. It is said of the wise men, when they opened their *treasures*, they presented gold, &c.; by which we are taught two things:

First, That pure love to God is the greatest treasure which the human mind is capable of enjoying. Indeed it is this alone which makes us *men* and *christians*—without love to God we have only the *form* of men, but are in our nature infernal. The will of man is so formed, as to receive the divine influx of heavenly *love*; but if our will be given up to the love of self, of the world, and evil, we thereby pervert the order of our life, and become *forms of evil*. On the contrary, by admitting the influx of divine love into the will, and living under the influence thereof, we become forms of goodness, and angelic in our natures.

The second thing we are taught, is, that love is a treasure which must be *opened*; that is, we must present it to the Lord. If we have received his love into our will, we must return it back again, by every duty of piety, worship, and service. The wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, to present their offerings, and do homage to the newborn Saviour. We are not to think any service too great, or any duty too burthensome, which we are called upon to render—it is love, as the poet says,

“That makes our cheerful feet in swift obedience move.”

It is this that makes all worship, as prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and the like, not only *easy*, but *desireable* and *pleasant*. It is our meat and our drink to do the will of God. Thus we open our treasures, and present all our affections to the Lord, in every duty of piety, religious worship, and spiritual service.

But, secondly, the next thing the wise men offered was *frankincense*; that is, as the word imports, FREE-INCENSE.

You will see this mentioned in several places of the holy word; in Lev. ii. 1, “And when any will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.” See also verses 15 and 16.

Now as every thing in the word corresponds to something spiritual, so by *frankincense* that which is
spiritual

spiritual is signified. As gold, therefore, corresponds *to*, and signifies the celestial principle; so frankincense corresponds to the spiritual principle; or, as gold applies to goodness and love, so frankincense applies to truth and faith—and as the former respects the *will*, the latter respects the *understanding*.

The meaning therefore is, that as the wise men offered to the Lord the highest principle of love, goodness, and affection in the will; so they united with it, the spiritual principle of truth and faith in the understanding. Their faith was grounded in love, and their truth in goodness. It is evident they were directed by *divine truth*, and influenced by a *divine faith*, or they never would have come so far to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

Had they not known, by the word, that Jehovah would come to save mankind, and had they not believed that the child born at Bethlehem was the manifested Jehovah, they *would not*, they *could not*, have *worshipped* him; for that very worship implied their firm belief that he was God as well as man. It was, therefore, *frankincense*, or a FREEINCENSE, which they offered; being convinced that Jesus was *the Christ*, and *the Lord their God*. Their will, therefore, was not only under the influence of heavenly love, but their understanding, also, was directed by *truth*, to believe in Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, and the object of their adoration.

And here, I presume, you will see the absolute necessity of *uniting* these *two principles*, in order to render

render an acceptable offering to the Lord our God. For take them separately, and what is their value? Why the gold becomes *dross*, and the frankincense a *disgusting* smell. A profession of love to God, without a *knowledge of him*, and *faith in him*, cannot be an acceptable sacrifice; and a knowledge of God, and faith in him, without *love to him*, must be equally unacceptable. How many are there who pretend an affection for the Lord, and have much of this love upon their tongues; appear very devout and sanctified in their worship, and at the same time have not in truth that love to God which causes them to do his will, and keep his commandments; are almost totally ignorant of his nature and perfections, and destitute of a sound spiritual faith? These may imagine they offer gold to the Lord; but they will sooner or later be convinced, their gold was dross and dirt.

Again, how many are there who have acquired a considerable knowledge of God, his word, and the doctrines and truths thereof; and who boast much of, and depend greatly upon, *faith* in his name, his merits, and sacrifice; and at the same time this faith is ALONE? It is not derived *from*, or connected *with*, PURE LOVE to the Lord, and his holy commandments. Can this offering be acceptable to the blessed God? Will he, who *knoweth the heart*, and *requireth the heart*, be pleased with such a sacrifice as this?—No, the frankincense has lost its perfume, and stinks in the nostrils of the Most High. The offering is not grounded in love, nor rooted in the

the will, and therefore it ascends not to heaven, but is dispersed, and vanishes away.

And I am sorry to say it; yea, I do *sincerely lament* that I have so much reason to say, that this is too much the state of professing christians in our day. By some means or other, the doctrine of justification by *faith alone*, has almost universally prevailed; and more than ever, I believe, within these twenty or thirty years past. Whereas one would think it must be evident, both from reason and scripture, that faith, if it be not grounded in love, and productive of good works, or true obedience to divine laws, can be of no value or use, nor in any sense acceptable to that God, who has told us by his apostles, that a "faith which can remove mountains is nothing, without *love*;" and that "faith without works is *dead*."

Let us, my christian brethren, give up, relinquish, and explode such a faith as this; it is of no use, will do us no good, nor ever be acceptable to the Lord Jesus. No sacrifice can please him, but that which arises from the heart; a sacrifice of pure love, founded in the knowledge of divine truth, and united with a sound operative faith.

Proceed we further, to notice the other part of the offering the wise men presented to the Lord. They presented unto him gifts, *gold, frankincense, and MYRRH*. Myrrh is an Arabian gum, extracted from the myrrh tree, and is frequently mentioned in the sacred scriptures. *Exod. xxx. 23,*
 "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure
 " myrrh

“myrrh five hundred shekels;” as a part of the compound which was to anoint the tabernacle. And Psa. xlv. 8, “All thy garments smell of myrrh, “and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.” And John xix. 39, “Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh, and aloes, about an hundred “pounds weight,” to anoint the body of Jesus.

Now as the word of the Lord is in itself *spiritual*, we may be assured these things have a spiritual signification, and what they signify can only be known by an acquaintance with the *science of correspondences*, by which that word is written. This science leaves us not to *mere conjecture*, concerning the true meaning of this thing and the other; but opens that meaning from its spiritual ground. As there is a *trinity* in the Lord, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one person, so there is a *trinity* in the word, as it contains a *celestial*, *spiritual*, and *natural* sense; there is also a *trinity* in man, as he possesses a *body*, a *soul*, and an *operation*; there is likewise a *trinity* in his internal, that is, a *will*, *understanding*, and *action*. Gold applies to his will, principle, or affection; frankincense to his understanding principle; and myrrh to his active principle, or conduct. Or *gold* signifies his *love* and *goodness*; *frankincense*, *truth* and *faith*; and *myrrh*, *charity* and *good-works*. The whole meaning of the text, therefore, in its internal and spiritual sense, is, that the wise men presented unto the Lord *pure love*, *true faith*, and *sincere obedience*. This was the treasure they possessed, and which they had received

received from the Lord (for all that is good is from him) and to the Lord they offered it. And by this, as well as by the whole word of God, we are taught that love, faith, and obedience, must ever be inseparably united, to make either of them valuable. By obedience, I mean a conscientious regard to the laws of God, as they respect piety, religion, and morality: for where there is a true love to God, and a sound faith in him, *there* will be charity towards mankind. The *outward life* will correspond to those inward principles; we shall love our neighbour as we love ourselves, and not only be honest, just, and upright in our commerce with men, but also *kind, charitable, benevolent, and tender*. And in vain do we pretend to love the Lord, or believe on him, if our conduct and conversation through life be not of this quality.

To love our neighbour is a sacrifice as acceptable to God as loving him; yea, we cannot love God if we do not love our neighbour—for John says, 1st Epist. iv. 20, “If a man say, I love God, “and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he who “loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how “can he love God whom he hath not seen? And “this commandment have we from him, that he “who loveth God love his brother also.”

Thus every *wise man*, every man who is taught of God (for such only are wise) will offer unto the Lord, *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*; or *love, faith, and charity*; or *goodness, truth, and obedience*.

Now

Now these are said to be the treasures which these wise men brought with them to Jerusalem, and offered unto the Lord. May I not ask you, my good friends, Is there any treasure in heaven or earth equal to this?—What is all the wealth of kingdoms, the gold of the Indies, or the honors of the world, in comparison with these? Why they are less than nothing, and vanity. If you possess this treasure, you are *rich indeed!* though you earned your bread by the sweat of your brow, and slept on beds of straw. But, without this, if you called kingdoms your own, and had a thousand vassals in your train, you would be poor, wretched, and miserable.

Now be it observed, that these treasures were brought with the wise men to Jerusalem, and offered to the Lord:—and what doth this circumstance teach us? Why a very important and pleasing lesson! If we are *real christians*, possessed of this divine treasure, where are we travelling? What journey are we taking? Why we are going to Jerusalem, the city and kingdom of the Lord our God. And what will recommend us to the divine favor, or give us admittance into the holy city, when the journey of life is over? Not a mere *profession* of religion, or saying, *Lord! Lord! have not we prophesied in thy name; and in thy name done many wonderful works?* but rather, the possession of this gold, frankincense, and myrrh; or that we have lived in true love to God, faith in his holy word, and sincere obedience to his heavenly commandments.—

Let

Let us but appear before the Lord, and lay this treasure at his feet, and we shall find a hearty welcome into his blessed kingdom; with a "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

I now appeal to you, my fellow christians; can any thing *less* than this constitute us *real* christians, the disciples of Jesus Christ? You know nothing less can! Can it be truly said, that we are wise men, or women, if we have not this treasure?—Is it any proof of true wisdom, to acquire the pleasures, riches, and honors of this present life; and at the same time remain ignorant of these true riches, this heavenly treasure?—Our reason convinces us which are to be preferred; which will do us the most good, and be the most lasting.

What remains, then, but that we apply to the Lord, give up all the powers of our souls to him, that we may be filled with his love, directed by his truth, and thus be enabled to love him, believe on his name, love our neighbour as ourselves, and faithfully keep his commandments.—Then our journey through life will be pleasant, useful, and happy. We shall be preparing *for*, and ready to enter *into*, the eternal kingdom above. When we are called away by death, and appear before the Lord in judgment, we shall be enabled to present unto him this *invaluable* and *acceptable* offering;

offering; namely, a life of *love, faith, and obedience*—the *gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh*. And, with inexpressible joy and rapture, we shall be admitted into the New Jerusalem above, with a “*Well done! thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*”

SERMON

SERMON II.

HUMILITY RECOMMENDED;

OR,

THE PROUD ABASED, AND THE HUMBLE EXALTED.

MATT. xxiii. 12.

And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.

SELF-EXALTATION is the child of **SELF-LOVE**: it is a disposition opposite to the good of mankind, the glory of God, and the happiness of our own souls; but such is the *depravity* of human nature, that every man inherits such a principle—is prone to the indulgence of it; it does not easily receive its death wound, and even then it lingers long before it dies. There is a strong propensity in every man to be great and honored; we naturally think highly of ourselves, over-rate our own qualifications, and judge too meanly of
C others.

others. Even in common life, the porter may think himself as great as a lord; the beggar strut in his rags, and judge that he ought to have been a prince.

This spirit of *self-love* and *exaltation*, lifts up its head in the religious world, stalks along with supercilious pride in the church of God; and too frequently renders itself conspicuous in those persons who ought to be the most humble.

The account we have of the christian church in its earliest days, even while the Lord Jesus was among them, shews us how this spirit prevailed—the apostles were too much under its influence—they wanted rule and dominion, and thirsted to be the greatest in his kingdom. But our Lord frequently checked their aspiring minds, and taught them lessons to humble their pride: he convinced them that *self-love* is the greatest enemy to real happiness—*self-exaltation* to true honor—and that the way to be great is to be humble.

These lessons, however contrary to the depraved mind of man, are the instructions of consummate wisdom and love, and happy is that man who learns and obeys them. Therefore my freedom and plainness will not offend my audience, if I earnestly intreat you all to seriously consider the import of our text, weigh its importance, and regulate your hearts and your lives by its instructions. If I know my *real desire*, my *true motive* in all my labors among you, it is that every one of my hearers,

hearers, whether *poor or rich, learned or unlearned*, of whatever *profession or denomination*, may be truly great, honorable, and happy, in the favor and kingdom of our one Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I see the absolute necessity of *regarding and loving christians of all parties alike*. Our universal Parent and God is no respecter of persons; every man and woman who loves him and obeys him, according to the light they have, are *his favorites, his people, and his children*; he loves them, he delights to honor them: and shall I, shall any of us, shew dislike, enmity, and disaffection to a brother, a sister, a fellow-christian, because their opinion, their judgment, or their profession, differ from ours?—God forbid! Have we all the same *education, connexions, or advantages*? No. Perhaps that man who differs from me the *most widely in judgment*, may be as far *superior* to me in *goodness of heart and life*, as an angel is superior to himself. And shall I indulge enmity and disaffection to him? Shall I not rather esteem and value him?—O, sirs! I ardently wish this *narrow, contracted, unchristian spirit*, were banished out of the world.

Suppose a parent has six, eight, or ten children, are they not of different dispositions, opinions, and pursuits?—but tell me which of them the feeling, the tender parent does not love. Does he bear *enmity and disaffection* towards them? No. And does not our kind indulgent heavenly parent *love all his children*? Are they not all our brethren? heirs

of the same kingdom? And, as real children of God, are we not all to live together in that same kingdom for ever? Will there be any ill-will, hatred, or disunion there? Will they not all love one another with a pure heart fervently, as they love themselves? Why then should we not love each other here, live in union, and do each other all possible good?

Suppose there is a methodist, and he is a good man in heart and life; suppose there is a baptist, and he is an upright good man; suppose there is an independent, there is a quaker, there is a presbyterian, and there is a member of the church of England, and each of these in real goodness of heart and life, men of piety and love—tell me which of these am I to *bate*? which of them am I to bear disaffection to? which of them am I not to love?—The language of reason, the word of truth, the voice of Jehovah, the heart of Jesus, says, LOVE THEM ALL.

Now, my christian hearers, I appeal to you, is not this love the *essence* of religion? Can we be the children of our heavenly Father if we do not cultivate it?—Then let us *all* set the example! Let us begin to *love*; not in word only, but in deed and in truth. Let us lay aside the *partial sectarian spirit*, and *think like men, act like christians, love like angels*.

You will pardon this apparent digression, my christian friends; it arose from my earnest desire
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that all division and disaffection among christians may totally cease, and universal harmony, peace, and love prevail. And to that ardent desire I may add my very sanguine hopes, that *discord* and *hatred*, those infernal demons, are taking their flight from the presence of *peace* and *love*, those celestial visitants, who are now descending from the heavens to dwell with men again; bless with their benign influence the church of the Lord; and make all christians happy in these last days. But to proceed to our text—"And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

And first, We will consider the nature of this evil, self-exaltation; in what manner it is manifested; and how such a person shall be abased.

Secondly, The nature of the opposite virtue, humility; in what manner it is manifested; and how such a person shall be exalted.

Thirdly, Conclude with a few inferences.

And first, we have observed that *self-exaltation* is the child of *self-love*, and self-love is opposite to the love of God and our neighbour; consequently it is a most dangerous and infernal principle—and where this principle reigns, that man hath nothing so much in his view as *self-exaltation*; and whether he be considered in civil or religious life, his *one end* is to exalt himself. In civil life you will see such a per-

son *proud, haughty, consequential*;—his *manner, address, and behaviour*, all indicate that the demon of *self-love* has erected a throne in his heart. If he be rich, his wealth only serves to increase his pride, feed his vanity, and add to his consequence—the more he possesses, the more is he puffed up with conceit and self-love. If in temporal honor and dignity, he supposes such honor and dignity are all his own, and do not belong to the office itself; the love of self persuades him he is qualified for the highest and most important office, and the love of dominion prompts him to aspire after it. But in all this there is no *good principle*, no desire for usefulness, no *laudable* motive—therefore, whosoever thus exalts himself, shall be abased. But as our text more particularly applies to *what is spiritual*, or of a religious nature, we will consider the subject in that view; for self-love and exaltation are but too visible in the church in christian communities. That this was the pharisees ruling principle is very evident; their religion was all *hypocrisy*, and that hypocrisy was put on for the sake of exaltation:—they loved the praise of men, had a very high opinion of themselves; the uppermost rooms at feasts, highest seat in the synagogue, greetings in the market-place they were fond of; all their sanctity, external righteousness, and pretended virtue, were assumed for the sake of *honor, praise, exaltation*. These were the idols to which they bowed the knee—the gods they devoutly worshipped.

ped. The devil held out the pleasing bait, "All these honors will I give you, if ye will fall down and worship me." Charmed with the offer, they accepted the proposal; worshipped the devil for a puff of praise; and, for the empty honor of a moment, plunged their souls into everlasting contempt and shame.

But again, *Self-exaltation* discovers itself in many by pretensions to *learning*, *superior wisdom*, *understanding*, and *knowledge*. How many are there who judge themselves intitled to honor, dignity, and rule in the church, through a vain imagination that they are more learned than others; that they possess superior wisdom, are better acquainted with religion, with the bible, the doctrines and truths of it, and more qualified to *instruct*, *rule*, and *govern*. And if they are not exalted to that eminence their supposed abilities merit, they think they are ill-treated, and are highly offended. If they ~~are~~ so exalted, they are proud, haughty, overbearing; the pinnacle they stand upon is much too high for their weak brains—they grow giddy with the elevation—their *folly* proves the deranged state of their intellects—they fall down from the pinnacle of honor—and the multitude, which just before shouted their praise, look down upon them with contempt and scorn.

Others there are who possess gifts and qualifications which might make them abundantly useful, and highly honorable; and who, nevertheless, from

self-love, a desire to be *exalted*, and a proud conceit of their own *abilities*, totally defeat their own intentions; never rise to that dignified state their own talents might have led them; but sink into obscurity and dishonor, merely by their own pride and imprudence. But suppose this should not be the case, and they should really obtain the exaltation desired; yet we shall find it will last but a day, and be succeeded by eternal disgrace, if *self-love*, or *love of dominion*, be at the bottom. For our divine Lord says, "Whosoever shall exalt himself, *shall be abased*."

Which leads me to drop a few words upon this part of the subject: the obvious meaning of which words appear to be this, viz. Whosoever lives under the influence of *self-love*, and *love of dominion*, is fond of exaltation and honor as the gratifications of such love, and has this only end in view, that is, the aggrandizement of himself—such a man will assuredly sink into *deserved shame and contempt*.—The principle from which he acts being of the meanest kind, his motives vile, and his affections infernal; he must, therefore, when stripped of all disguise, appear in his own proper character, and meet the disappointment, reproach, and shame, inseparably connected with such a mean and unworthy mind.

He has not considered that he was born for others, and not for himself alone; he has not sought the good of his neighbour and the glory of God in all his

his efforts towards exaltation; but led by the impulse of self-love, has neither regarded the glory of God, or the good of mankind; all his aim has been to exalt himself, and could that end be obtained, he (like the unjust judge) neither feared God nor regarded man. Such a man, and such a life, can meet with nothing less than everlasting shame, contempt, and sorrow.

But to relieve the mind from this unpleasing picture of human depravity, we will enter upon the counter-part, viz. the nature of the opposite virtue, *humility*; in what manner it is manifested, and how such a person shall be exalted. "He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." By *true humility* we are not to understand a *mean, dastardly, low mind*; but rather a *great and noble mind*. For true greatness consists in a just knowledge of ourselves, of our dependence upon the Divine Being, our connexions with mankind, and that line of conduct we are to observe in life: and such knowledge is essential to *humility*. By knowing ourselves, I mean, to know what we are as men; that we are mere organs receptive of life from the Lord; that in ourselves we are nothing but mere evil; that our whole dependence is upon the love, wisdom, and mercy of our heavenly Father; for whatever we enjoy in this life, or that which is to come. And to know our connexion with mankind is to understand that we are not to live for *self* only, but for the good of others; that one man cannot live without another;

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that we are designed to be of *use* each to other; and that our own happiness depends upon so being. And, therefore, that there is a certain line of conduct we are to observe, first, in respect to God; and next, in respect to our neighbour, or mankind. And then we shall see it is impossible to pursue that conduct, or act in our place, *without humility*.

First, In respect to the Divine Being. As we are in ourselves *mere evil*, by having averted our minds from the Lord, violated his laws, and become sensual and vile; and as our God is a Being of perfect holiness, truth, and purity, we must see the necessity of being *humble* before him. Pride is the offspring of ignorance, but humility is the child of wisdom! Men have conceived an idea that they are *independent* both of God and man: when once arrived to maturity they imagine themselves their own masters, nor dream of dependence upon another. But wisdom teaches a different lesson—reason and scripture convince us that we are *never* independent. Our very and essential life, is continued to us every moment by influx from the Lord; and were that influx suspended one single second, we should instantly cease to live, or to be men. The soul of man is not life in itself, but only an organ receptive of life from God, who is the fountain of it. Such being our *dependence* upon the Divine Being, it becomes us surely to be humble before him; especially when we reflect how much we have *perverted* this life, by sensual desires, evil dispositions, and a disobedient conduct.

conduct. So when the publican returned to his God, he stood afar off from the altar, cast down his eyes to the ground, bent the trembling knee before the Lord, and in the deepest humility and contrition said, "*God be merciful to me a sinner !*" When the prodigal awoke from his folly, knew his abandoned state, and felt his wretchedness, his language was that of humility—"I will arise and go to my father, "and I will say, Father I have sinned against heaven "and before thee, and am no more worthy to be "called thy son; make me as one of thy hired "servants."

Now when we consider that we receive our life continually from the Lord, that we are in ourselves mere evil, that whatever is good or true is from the Lord, and that every moment we depend upon him, we shall see abundant reason to be humble, lowly-minded, and self-abased before him. This humility will be manifested in all dutiful obedience to the divine will; in a cheerful acquiescence with his holy laws, in a constant dependence upon his goodness and mercy, and a total resignation to his pleasure.

Again, the man of wisdom, the man who is taught of God, will be convinced that he is not to live for *self only*, but for the good of others; that one man cannot live without another; that we are designed to be of use each to other; and that our happiness depends upon so being. Hence will be suggested to the mind, a certain line of conduct which

which must be observed for mutual good and happiness; a conduct which stands at the utmost distance from pride, high-mindedness, self-love, and love of dominion; and which consists in *humility, charity, condescension, and good will*. With this man, it will not be, *who shall be the greatest, the most exalted, and honored*; but who shall be the most *kind, loving, and useful*. In all his conduct you will see a spirit of humility, charity, and meekness. The honor he aspires after is to do good, to be useful, to benefit and make happy his neighbour to the utmost of his power. And under the influence of this disposition, he will do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God.

But to proceed. Our divine Lord says, "he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted." This exaltation implies much more than can be noticed now. Suffice it to observe, that this exaltation is *interior, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal*. The humble, lowly mind, enjoys an exaltation of soul infinitely superior to all the greatness, honor, and dignity this world can boast, or give: for he rises above that *sordid, evil, and infernal life*, in which pride, ignorance, and folly had sunk him. His affections are no longer placed upon objects mean, vile, and degrading; his understanding, no longer the dupe of ignorance, folly, and vanity; nor the noble faculties of his mind devoted to sensuality, dissipation, and vice. His will is exalted to goodness, his understanding to truth, his affections to God, his conduct

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to *piety, religion, and virtue*; and the whole man to a heavenly state of peace, tranquility, and bliss. The *good, the humble mind*, is no longer a natural, sensual, earthly man; he is become spiritual, pure, and heavenly. He is elevated into a spiritual and divine sphere of love, charity, and goodness; has communion with angels, and conjunction with his God. His humility requested to be only a servant in the Lord's house; but mercy and love divine have made him a son. As he sunk in his own estimation, he rose in the divine favor; and by dying to pride, self-love, and love of dominion, he arose to the life of heaven, the love of God, true charity, and celestial honor.

The exaltation of which our Lord here speaks is internal, spiritual, and divine. It is no less than raising the man from the lowest and most awful state of shame, sin, death, and infernal wretchedness, to *glory, purity, life, and heaven*. It is elevating the whole mind into the *image and likeness of God*; to make him angelic in all his powers; a pure spotless form of love and wisdom; an inhabitant of the celestial world; where Jehovah himself resides, and where *glory, honor, immortality, and joy for ever reign*.

But we will conclude with a few inferences.

First, then we may infer from what has been said, that self-exaltation is the high road to shame, contempt, and woe. Let us avoid this dangerous evil; by seriously reflecting on its consequences; by considering

considering we are in ourselves *nothing but evil*; and that whatever is good, true, amiable, and useful, is from the Lord alone. But,

Secondly, Let us consider, that *true* humility arises from a knowledge of ourselves, our dependence upon God, and our connexion with each other; therefore, be it our care to obtain that knowledge. When we know ourselves aright, we shall see nothing to feed our pride; when we know our dependence upon the Lord for life, well-being, redemption, and happiness, we shall sink at his feet in profound humility and reverence; and when we understand our connexion with others, that we are, as it were, one family; that each one has his particular place in the scale of existence; and that much of our happiness depends upon our acting in that place for the good of the whole; we shall then see that self-love, self-exaltation, and pride, belong not to man: but that *love to God, charity to man, and true humility*, are essential to our happiness, honor, and glory, both in this world and that which is to come.

Let us then all walk in love, humility, meekness, and charity; cultivate these divine virtues; and endeavour to make each other as happy as we wish to be ourselves; and then leave our own honor, exaltation, and happiness, to our kind and faithful God, who saith, "he that humbleth himself, *shall be exalted.*"

His word is *true*; and *thus living*, we shall soon arise to that state of honor, glory, and happiness, in
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the eternal world, which our eyes have not yet seen, our ears heard, or our hearts conceived. But which will assuredly be given to all the humble followers, the faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

SELF-LOVE RELINQUISHED:

EVIL PRINCIPLE RENOUNCED FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: SAVED.

Now when Jesus heard these things, he stood near him, Yet he said, thou one thing, tell all this thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

HAD we a true knowledge of the sacred scriptures in their internal spiritual sense, it would be a true knowledge of the divine ideas, which produce in Christians the true heavenly light, and captivate the minds of men to goodness, piety, and virtue. But mankind, having for many ages, considered the holy word in a material point of view only, they have formed the most extravagant opinions, and repudiated the

SERMON III.

SELF-LOVE RELINQUISHED;

OR,

EVIL PRINCIPLES RENOUNCED FOR THE KINGDOM OF
HEAVEN'S SAKE.

LUKE xviii. 22, 23.

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful—for he was very rich.

HAD we a true knowledge of the sacred scriptures in their internal spiritual sense, it would obviate many disagreeable ideas, which professing christians have conceived; it would set *religion* in its true heavenly light; and captivate the minds of men to goodness, piety, and virtue. But mankind having, for many ages, considered the holy word in a *literal* point of view *only*, they have formed the most extravagant opinions, and represented religion

ligion in a light the *most unpleasant, forbidding, and melancholly*. The zealots of our day would persuade you, that the language of the gospel, and the nature of christianity are such, that the man of *affluent circumstances, of competent fortune*, who possesses a few hundreds or thousands per year, cannot possibly go to heaven—unless a most extraordinary miracle is wrought in his favor.

If you ask them, upon what ground they form an opinion so contracted and uncharitable, they will urge the words of our Lord a little below our text, viz. “that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Now, as it is impossible in the nature of things for a camel to pass through a needle’s eye; so they imagine it is equally impossible for a man of temporal wealth to enter into heaven. And yet I am persuaded, not one of these zealots in religion would have the least objection to a few thousands per year, if they could obtain them. Nay, I query whether they are quite easy and contented in their own low and humble line of life; although they have, in their own opinion, a much greater prospect and chance of going to heaven than their wealthy neighbour.

Now, if it be actually true that the rich and affluent have so little chance of being happy, in another life; if it be next to impossible that they should be so; their state is certainly the *least* to be *envied*, and the *most pitied*, of any other in human life. But is

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there not a manifest absurdity upon the face of this sentiment? Can we suppose that a man, born to the possession of large estates, is born to inevitable misery and ruin? or that a man who has, by honest industry, acquired thousands of gold and silver, has also acquired a cell in the infernal regions, dark and dismal, in proportion to the value of his gold? How much is it to be lamented that the holy word of the God of Love should be thus prostituted and perverted, to establish and confirm the most *illiberal sentiment*; an idea so *mean and irrational*. And when men of fortune and wealth are told by religious teachers, by christian ministers, that in order to be truly religious and solidly happy in heaven, they must make a sacrifice of *their property*, and become beggars; is it any wonder that they go away disgusted—conceive an unfavourable opinion of christianity—and even think hard of its author?

I am persuaded, one principal reason why so few of the rich and polite, the learned and wealthy, are truly christian in heart and life, is, that the religion of the bible is represented in so *disagreeable, gloomy, and forbidding* a light, that it has no grandeur to engage, nor charms to captivate their minds. Moreover, as men are sunk into much depravity of heart, and their affections too much placed upon what is evil; so the *understanding* is perverted and darkened by tradition, false-doctrine, and error; insomuch that religion is seen through an inverted, or false mirror—and she appears rather as an object of dread, disgust,

disgust, and terror, than as the most desirable, beautiful, and lovely of *all forms whatever*.

But the time is come for the removal of all these *false appearances*—to expel the haggard phantom, which, under the name of religion, has long deceived mankind; and to represent *true christianity, genuine piety, the life of heaven*, in all its *divine charms, excellence, and beauty*. The internal spiritual sense of the holy word, which is the foundation of all religion and virtue, is now opened to the understandings of men; and as we enter into the knowledge thereof, we shall form *just notions* of the Divine Being, have the most animating views of his love, wisdom, and perfections; see pure christianity in its own native form, and be constrained to goodness of heart and life by the pleasure, honor, and happiness which inseparably attend it.

Suppose I were to say to the more wealthy part of my present audience, that you must relinquish all your property, sell all that you have, give it away to the poor, and become beggars yourselves—to live upon the scanty boon of frozen charity. And suppose I could prove all this by the scriptures—would you not, like the ruler of the Jews, go away very sorrowful? Would you not wonder that the kind benevolent God, who had given you all your substance, should require you to give it all away and enjoy it no more? Would you know how to account for the will of the Divine Being, upon any principles of love, goodness, and mercy? It should seem not.

Yea, rather, would it not create in you a very unfavourable idea of your God; and cause you to dread his power, rather than love his name?

Is it possible, then, that the Divine Being, who freely gives us every temporal and spiritual blessing to enjoy, can make the loss and deprivation of all our temporal blessings, *essential* to our becoming fit subjects for his heavenly kingdom? It cannot be; and God forbid that we should ever entertain such an idea of our *kind, loving, benevolent* Friend and Father! But, it may be asked by some, Did not this ruler imagine that the Lord meant, he must give up all his earthly riches, and distribute them to the poor? because it is said, he was very sorrowful, in consequence of his being very rich? That *he* might so conceive is very probable, as he was merely an external mind; and our Lord always addressed men according to their states. But that it was *really* necessary for him literally to sell and give away all that he had, is contrary to reason, to scripture, and the order of Divine Providence.

Let us, then, consider what is the *true spiritual* import of our text.

And first, What are we to understand by these words, *sell all that thou hast*? It appears that this ruler was a man of *decent, moral life*; yet this life had not its ground in a *spiritual* principle, but in a *natural* one. He was under the influence of self-love, and love of the world, or covetousness. With all his pretended virtue, or regard to divine laws, he bowed

bowed his knee at the golden shrine, loved himself above all others, and stretched not forth the benevolent hand of charity to the sons of poverty, want, and woe. He had, therefore, much *self-love, covetousness, and pride*. His virtue might have a specious *external* appearance, but within it was *unsound*, destitute of a *spiritual principle*, and in no wise *genuine and good*. Go, therefore, saith the heart-searching, all-knowing Lord, and *sell all that thou hast. Give up thy love of self, relinquish thy covetous desires, renounce thy pride, and exchange thy apparent external virtue, for internal and genuine goodness.*

These were the things he was ordered to sell; because they are all incompatible *with*, and stand opposed to the heavenly life, and eternal happiness. A man whose ruling principle is the *love of self*, is very far from the kingdom of God; because that love is directly opposite to the love which prevails in the heavenly kingdom. And covetousness, or the love of money, is *idolatry*. While, therefore, a man is under the influence of such principles, he can have no genuine virtue or goodness, inasmuch as it is all *contaminated* by those sordid and evil principles. These, then, are the things which our Lord ordered the ruler to sell, or give up. And then,

Secondly, Distribute to the poor. But who or what are we to understand by the poor? Why, sirs, while a man is under the influence of the *principles above-named*, governed by *self-love, covetousness, love of the world, &c.* *he himself* is in the most abject

poverty, although he possesseth millions of gold and silver. His understanding is in darkness, error, and delusion; his will is corrupted and debased; his affections are placed upon *unsubstantial, unsatisfying, and empty* things; his life is become evil; and he is fallen among thieves, who have robbed him of all true riches, wounded him, left him half dead, and exposed to want, wretchedness, and ruin. And we may apply the words of our Lord in the Rev. iii. 17, 18, to such a person "Thou sayest, I am rich, "and encreased with goods, and have need of "nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, "and miserable, and *poor*, and blind, and naked. I "counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, "that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that "thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy "nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes "with eye salve, that thou mayest see."

Now, when a man is disposed to sell all that he hath, to give up his self-love, love of the world, covetousness, his own propriety; he is then prepared to receive these heavenly and true riches; and thus he distributes to the poor; his poor blind understanding is illuminated by divine truth, filled with heavenly wisdom, his impoverished will is turned to the Lord, and replenished with *heavenly love*; the mind which was governed by the worst of principles, is now under the influence of love to God, and charity to man; the *life* that was before earthly, sensual, and evil, becomes heavenly, spiritual, and good. And thus

thus the poor mind is made rich, the hungry soul is fed, the sickly affections are healed, the imprisoned powers of man are set free; and the internal and external life are brought into divine order.

It is added in our text, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." By heaven, as I have before noticed, the mind of a *renewed*, or *good* man, is frequently signified; because a regenerate man is an image, or form of heaven. The meaning, therefore, is, when thou hast sold all that thou hast, thy self-love, thy own propriety, thy evil principles, and life; thou shalt then enjoy *true riches, heavenly treasures*. Which for the sake of brevity may be comprehended under *two words*, viz. *wisdom and love*, or *truth and goodness*. For as the understanding and the will constitute the whole man, so the greatest possible treasure the understanding can enjoy, is divine *wisdom* or *truth*; which consists in a right knowledge of God, of his holy word, of ourselves, of spiritual things, and of heaven.

As we all know we are to live here but a little while, but in the other world for ever and ever; so we must be convinced that the *truest* and *highest* wisdom, is to know what relates to our souls happiness and our eternal state. And this wisdom can only be obtained by divine influx from the Lord, through his word. And the greatest possible treasure the will can enjoy, is *divine love* or *goodness*; because the divine love of the Lord is the source of all happiness and felicity. It is true that the divine love

of the Lord, is ever manifested towards us, whatever may be our state or life ; but then we do not enjoy it, and reap the unspeakable benefits thereof, until we give up all our will and affections to the Lord ; loving him above all things, with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then the mind is open to, and receptive of the divine influx of love and goodness, in all its beatitudes and delights ; and admitting this divine love and wisdom into our minds, we become *good and wise ourselves* : love to God, and charity to man, is the principle from which we think, speak, and act.—all evil is hated and forsaken ; and we have treasure in heaven. That is, we have in the soul, all the blessed fruits of love and wisdom, goodness and truth : heaven itself is formed within, and all the beatitudes of that eternal world, are springing up in our souls.

The next advice our Lord gives the ruler, is, "*and come, follow me.*" As every word our blessed teacher delivered was in divine order, so a beautiful order appears in this text—1st, he must sell all that he has—2dly, distribute to the poor—3dly, have treasure in heaven—and 4thly, follow his Lord. The order of our regeneration, our heavenly life, and our final happiness, is seen in these words. The first step is to give up, and depart from all that is evil, in heart and life ; the second, to turn the mind to the Lord ; the third, is to receive the heavenly treasures of love and wisdom into the will and understanding ; and then to follow the Lord, by an
unreserved

unreserved obedience to his holy laws: for by following him is meant, to imitate his example, to do his will. This, then, is the order of our regeneration; to depart from all known evil, whatever those evils may be, as they are sins against God our Father, Redeemer, and Saviour; to turn the mind to the Lord for instruction and wisdom; to receive the heavenly treasures of love, goodness, and truth; and then, to follow him in faithful obedience to his holy will and laws, will be easy and pleasing.

From what has been said, sirs, I hope it will appear plain, what our Lord means when he says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." For I do not conceive there is any more difficulty for a man, who possesses from one to fifty thousands per year, to get to heaven, than there is for those who gain their bread by the sweat of their brow. For if there was, what man in his senses would strive to get wealth? What rational thinking mind would dare to keep it when gotten? And how is it that a kind and merciful God, would give the goods of this life so liberally as he does to thousands and tens of thousands; if the possession of them would so certainly, and dreadfully, impede the everlasting happiness of the possessor?

But, sirs, this is not the case; the difficulty does not arise from the extent of land we possess, the number of houses we can call our own, or the weight of our silver and gold. But when our Lord, says, "It is easier

“easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”—He means the man who is rich in his own esteem; puffed up with pride, full of self-love, and love of dominion; and who places all his happiness in the enjoyment of what is merely *natural, sensual, and earthly*.

This is the man who says of himself, he is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing; not knowing that he is poor, and wretched, blind, naked, and miserable. And while in that state, it is impossible he can enter the kingdom of God; and living, and dying therein, he can never find admission there. But as to the *mere possession of temporal wealth*, it no more impedes or prevents our living in heaven, than poverty prevents it. The way to heaven and happiness is the *same* for one man as another; the rich and the great, the poor and the mean, have equal access to it.

A principle of self-love, covetousness, and thirst for dominion, may operate as powerfully in the heart of a beggar, as in the mind of a lord. Let not those who are in low circumstances suppose, because they are so, that they are more the objects of divine favor, and stand a better chance for heaven, than the rich. Nor let the wealthy imagine, on the one hand, that they have a superiority over the *lower classes* of men, in what concerns their souls, and eternal life; nor, on the other hand, that they stand not an equal chance for heaven, and all its beatitudes.

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It is an indubitable truth, that all souls are of equal value with the Lord; and the one thing necessary, both in the learned and unlearned, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, is, that pure and heavenly principle from which all true religion must arise, and all real happiness flow—and that is, LOVE TO GOD, AND CHARITY TO MAN. And I am persuaded, the rich and wealthy are as susceptible of this principle, as the poor and needy. Wherever this pure love to God and charity to man is found, that person, if *poor*, will be contented in his state, envy not those who are more wealthy than himself, but be as useful to all as he possibly can, in that humble situation which providence has placed him. If he be a man of affluence and wealth, he will consider himself as the steward of the Lord, to disperse and diffuse the bounties of Divine Providence, to the relief and comfort of the poor and wretched. The love of God will inspire him with a *noble, benevolent* mind; charity to man, will prompt him to every possible act of kindness, compassion, and pity; and wisdom from the Lord, will direct him to distribute both spiritual and temporal goods with prudence and discretion, to the sons and daughters of want and misery—the hapless children of sorrow and woe.

Let us then endeavor to be properly acquainted with the true nature of that religion, which our blessed Lord hath taught us in his word. Let us consider, that it is equally adapted to all classes and conditions of men, the high and low, rich and poor,
learned

learned and unlearned ; and that the sum and substance of it is, to know the Lord, love him, keep his laws, love one another, and be useful to all, as far as we have power. We have nothing to *part* with, but what is *evil, false, and infernal* ; we have nothing to *do*, but what is *good, true, and heavenly* ; and we have nothing to expect, but *honor, glory, immortality, and unspeakable felicity*.

If you are in states of indigence and poverty, be *contented and resigned*—the Lord will take care of you, and bless you ; love him, depart from all evil, and keep his commandments—and you will very soon have as much riches, honor, and happiness, in his eternal kingdom, as you can possibly enjoy. If you are rich, wealthy, and great—die to self-love, love of the world, and of dominion ; from love to God, obey his laws ; from charity to man, diffuse happiness all around you ; be faithful stewards of the blessings you have received, whether temporal or spiritual ; enjoy the bounties of providence with gratitude and thankfulness, and be assured you shall soon be raised to more durable riches, more heavenly joys, more exalted honors, and everlasting happiness, pleasure, and glory, in his eternal kingdom.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

OUR OWN HEARTS THE RESIDENCE OF OUR GREATEST FOES.

MATT. x. 36.

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

IT is an indubitable truth, that man was created to be *happy*. The God who created him is *love*, in its essence. He formed man in his own image and likeness; he came out of his hands *pure*; and his Maker pronounced him *good*.—Whatever proceeds *from*, or is the work of the Almighty, much resemble its author; and as he is goodness itself, he can but delight in the happiness of every part of his creation; and as *man* is the highest and noblest work of God, so the highest and

and most sublime happiness must be designed for him. And whoever supposes that the blessed God created mankind with any other design than to make them completely happy, must have but very imperfect notions of the Divine Being.

But as no rational being can be happy without *free agency*, or *liberty of choice*—so man was created with a freedom of mind: and as he was created in a natural world, surrounded with natural objects, and endowed with various natural senses, and also had a will to choose, and an understanding to direct him in that choice, so he was at liberty either to sink beneath the dignified situation in which he stood, or to rise into a more elevated and exalted state. To *sink* by *sensual gratifications*, or rise by *mental endowments*—by *spiritual attainments*.

In this state of freedom and liberty which man was created (and without which he could not be man) he continued not long undefiled. Leaning to the *sensual principle*, he averted himself from the centre of good, departed from the fountain of *happiness* and *purity*, and immersed himself in evil and sorrow. From age to age the children of men have become more and more degenerate—evil has abounded and increased—the whole man is totally out of divine order, and is become his own most dangerous enemy. This is so evident that it needs no proof by argument. Daily experience evinces, that children of all descriptions, as they advance from infancy, discover dispositions and tempers inimical

inimical to their future happiness and well-being; and none of us need go from our own doors to find enemies which would plunge us in ruin.

It has generally been understood by the words of our text, i. e. "a man's foes shall be they of his own household," that our divine Lord means our *families, relations, our parents, and brethren*, shall be our foes; doing all they can to prevent our becoming his disciples, and being happy with him in heaven. And indeed if this be the Lord's meaning, and the preceding verses, as connected with this, be taken in *this light*, they seem to represent the Lord himself as the real cause of all such enmity and opposition. For the Lord says, "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." But can any one suppose that the Prince of Peace, the kind and loving Redeemer, could come into the world with design to do that which the devil himself has always been doing, and still does?—Variance, enmity, hatred, and division, are directly opposite to the temper, laws, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ;—and therefore in this light the words must not be understood.

I know how some persons endeavour to *qualify* and explain the words. They say, the Lord does not design these things should take place, but his doctrines will eventually have that effect when they are cordially received. But I must assert they *will*
not,

not, they *cannot*; for whoever truly receives the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, will thereby experience an increasing *affection*, *love*, and *regard*, for his parents and kindred; he will have no enmity, ill-will, or hatred towards them. But it may be said, that in consequence of his believing and obeying the truth, his parents and kindred may be at variance with him. This, I will admit, *may* be the case; but then it is not the Lord, but the *devil*, or their own depraved dispositions, which create that variance and enmity. Therefore, in the literal sense of the words, the Lord does not come to set a man at variance with his parents and kindred. No, his doctrines and laws teach a very different conduct—they breathe nothing but love, charity, good-will, meekness, and the like. The real christian, the truly good man, is at enmity with no one—he loves all his fellow-creatures—forgives their injuries—and does good to them who hate him. And although you read, in several places in the evangelists, that a man must *forsake*, and even *bate* father and mother, sister and brother, wife and children, for the sake of the Lord and his gospel; yet I hope you will never conclude from thence, that the religion of the kind and loving Jesus, teaches you actually to forsake and hate your near and dear relations according to the flesh. To form such a conclusion, would be to injure the Lord, and degrade his religion beneath that of Mahomed. And I would here just remark, how essentially necessary it is for us to be acquainted

acquainted with the internal and spiritual sense of the holy word, that so we may avoid such mistakes as these, and see the harmony and consistency of one part of the word with another. By a man's foes being they of his own household, is generally understood; that when a man becomes religious, and is in earnest for happiness and heaven, his family, kindred, and acquaintance, will become his enemies; do all they can to dissuade him from a religious life; and probably commence his persecutors. That this *may* be the case, we must allow—that it has too often been known, we cannot deny. Nevertheless, for the honor of human nature, in a land of religion, we would hope the instances are not *many*, or *frequent*: nor can I by any means admit that this is the meaning of our text. Our Lord does not say a man's foes *MAY*; but they *SHALL* be (or *WILL BE*) they of his own household. It is not a thing that *may*, or *may not*, be; a mere *uncertainty*; but it *actually will* be so; and I am assured, when the true sense of the words are considered, every serious christian now present, must acknowledge the truth and certainty of them in his own experience.

We will, therefore, attempt to illustrate the words according to their genuine spiritual meaning; in doing which, we will,

First, Consider what is meant by a man's household.

Secondly, What are the particular foes of that household.

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, In what respects they are so.

Fourthly, How they are to be overcome.

And fifthly, The essential necessity of that victory, in order to our happiness.

And first, We are to consider what is meant by a *man's household*. You will observe, that the word of the Lord is written by correspondences. Natural terms and phrases are used to express *spiritual* things. This has been so frequently proved and illustrated, that I need not dwell upon it now. The Lord's church is called a vineyard, a house, a city, &c. because it corresponds to such things. The good man is called a temple, a branch, a sheep, and the like; because of his correspondence to such things. So the mind of man is compared to a *house*, as in Matt. xii. 29, "But if I cast out devils by the
"spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come
"nigh unto you; or else, how can one enter into a
"strong man's *house*, and spoil his goods, except he
"first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil
"his *house*?" And in verses 44 and 45, "then
"he saith, I will return into my *house* from whence
"I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it
"swept and garnished: then goeth he, and taketh
"with himself seven other spirits more wicked than
"himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and
"the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Thus the mind of man is compared to a house, because of the correspondence between the one and the
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the other. A house being that which *contains*, and is *filled* with those things which are for the use and accommodation of man; so the *mind* contains in itself whatever is constituent of man—whatever is proper to man—all those powers, faculties, and qualifications, essential to man; and is the sole recipient of whatever can make him happy or miserable. As, therefore, the mind is thus compared to a *house*, so whatever is contained therein may properly be called its *household*. And as a man's house may be stored with what is *useful*, or with what is *pernicious*—as he may admit *friends* into it, or *enemies*—so, likewise, may it be as to the mind. And I am persuaded, an impartial examination will convince us, that the principal foes to which we are exposed are those of our own household—those which we have admitted into the mind, *chosen* as our *companions*, *caressed* as our *friends*, and too long placed our affections upon. Perhaps we may find some difficulty in a proper discrimination between our foes and our friends, but that difficulty will vanish away, if we take the Lord's word for our guide in the examination. And as I do not know any subject relative to man, of more importance than this before us, we will endeavor,

Secondly, To explain *what* and *who* are the *particular* foes of a man's own household.

First, We have before observed, that man has averted himself from the Lord, and is become a fallen contaminated sinner. Whatever, therefore,

is admitted into the mind in consequence of such fall, *that thing* is an *enemy* to the man. And indeed there is not a *single evil* which man has made his own, but what is, in the strictest sense of the word, a *foe* of his own household; as every evil is an enemy to his real happiness. But to *enumerate* these is not my present design, neither could that be done in one discourse. There are certain principles from which, as their parents, these evils exist; and *those principles* are what I mean now to consider. It is well known that in every man, since the fall, there is a *sensual, earthly, vile principle*, which operates in the mind against all that is good and heavenly; this sensual principle the most ancient people called the *serpent*, because, as serpents live close to the earth, and eat the dust thereof, so sensual things are closely connected with the *body*; and *sensual men* live on what is *corporeal* and *terrestrial*. From this *sensual principle*, this *earthly* evil disposition, proceed what the apostle calls the works of the flesh—as adulteries, fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Again, another principle in the mind is *self-love*, from which pride, covetousness, contempt of others, injustice, cruelty, and many other evils flow. And as these evils exist in the mind, and are cherished there, so infernal spirits who are in the love of those evils, can associate with us, prompt us to indulge in whatever those principles lead

lead to, tempt us to the gratification of every evil desire, and thus equally become the foes of our own household.

Permit me to observe further, that these principles, with all their train of evils, not only exist in the mind, but become the objects of *our affections*—we love them, they are a part of ourselves, and become *our life*. They are as much our own household as our brethren, our children, our kindred. By our affection for them, we are blind to their nature, their accursed designs, and consequences. If reason exhibits a charge against them, our affections deny the charge—If serious reflexion *whispers* how vile they are, our impetuous passions will not let us hear the friendly voice. We are too unwilling to believe any thing we *love* ought to be *bated*—or any thing we have *chosen* ought to be *relinquished*. But let it not be so with us—may we rather,

In the third place, consider in what respects these are our foes. “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

First, Suppose a man under the influence of a *sensual earthly principle*. He is given up to the gratification of his carnal lusts, desires, and passions. Adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, intemperance, and the like, are his beloved evils. What greater foes can he possibly have? These vices may lead him to shame, poverty, affliction, and sorrow; but they *cannot* make him *happy*. No, they are foes to his peace—they degrade the man—debase all his

rational powers—and sink him into contempt, infamy, and woe. And while a man is in the love of these evils, indulging himself in the practice of them, he unfits himself for reflexion, deprives himself of reason; he is deaf to the remonstrances of conscience—the warnings of revelation—and the voice of God. And why is he so? Because the rational principle is become *sensual*—the body is preferred to the soul—and what is earthly to what is heavenly. And while this sensual principle reigns, and the mind is thus depraved, how can the man be his own friend? All the overtures of divine mercy are disregarded, the word of truth rejected, conscience silenced, reason led captive, and the man's foes are they of his own household.

Again, when *self-love* is a ruling principle in the mind, then pride, covetousness, contempt of others, injustice, and the like, are indulged; and these are so many powerful foes to the happiness of man. Humility, generosity, charity, good-will, uprightness, can find no place in such a mind, and from those true happiness flow. But, moreover, while a man is under the influence of these principles and evils, he is in close connexion, in intimate association with evil spirits; infernal beings, who will ever exert themselves to prevent the true happiness of man: their influence is great and powerful; and so long as evil is indulged, so long will they have a place in the mind; so long will they be foes of our own household. Let us be assured, therefore, that the
principal

principal foes we have to our true peace and happiness in this world and the next, are those which we harbor and cherish in our minds. We may say the world is ensnaring, the concerns of life lead us away from that which is for our good, the converse and company of men betray us to evil; that these are our enemies: but, first, our chief foes *are within*. The heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked—sensuality, self-love, love of the world, pride, lust, and a thousand other evils, have entered into the mind, contaminated the affections, perverted the judgment, and endangered our everlasting peace and felicity. And these must be driven out, overcome, and subdued, if we would be happy. Which leads me to notice, in the

Fourth place, how, and by what means, they are to be overcome.

And here we shall do well to consider, that powerful as the influence of evil is, deep as it is rooted in the mind, and long as it may have been indulged, yet the strong man is to be driven out, the foe is to be conquered.

First, then, let us exercise our *reason*—we are men—we are immortals—we are to live for ever. Are we capable of judging between *evil* and *good*? Can we reflect, examine, and consider? We can. Why, then, should we suffer *passion* to triumph over *reason*, folly to lead wisdom captive, and the body to debase the soul. Conscience, reason, and revelation, convince us, that *evil* was never designed for

man—he was created in the image and likeness of God—in that state alone could he be happy, because all happiness is in and from Jehovah. If we have departed from that state, and chosen evil in preference to good, it is time for us to abandon the choice. The divine word of truth has directed us how to proceed; depart from evil, fly from thy enemies, return to thy centre, and be happy. There is no evil but the Lord enables us to relinquish—no enemy but we may escape. If our foes are they of our own household, if they exist in the affections, it becomes us to examine what they are, to enter into our own hearts; to see if we are *sensual*, earthly minded, full of *self-love*, *pride*, *hatred*, or whatever else. To reason upon the nature of those evils, the consequences of them, the danger attending them, to consider they are sins against a good God, a holy, pure being, a kind and tender parent; that we are exhorted and commanded to give them up, because they will render us eternally miserable: and thus to turn away from them with all the heart and soul. And by so doing we admit the divine influence of love and wisdom from the Lord into the mind, by which those interior evil principles will be eradicated and subdued; evil spirits dispersed; and our foes consigned to their proper hells: and in their place we shall entertain angels, true friends, heavenly virtues; such as love to God, spiritual affections, charity to man, humility, heavenly mindedness, and ten thousand beatitudes will follow

follow in their train. I do not know, my christian friends, what you may think of it; but I see an absolute necessity of entering into my own heart, of searching every corner of it, lest any infernal foes, any accursed evil, should lurk there. I have need to say with David, "Lord, search me, and try me, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

I fear most of us have some foes yet remaining—some evils yet unsubdued—some *sensual* dispositions; and I can but solicitously advise and exhort you, to search them out, and put them away. The divine rays of light, which now shine from the sun of heaven, are sufficient to penetrate the most secret recesses of our minds; and the divine beams of love from that sun, sufficient to burn up every sensual lust and vile affection. To that light and that heat, that heavenly truth and love, I would commend you. Give yourselves up thereto, and your foes will fly before you; evils will be subdued, and you will return to the blessed image and likeness of the Lord, which by evil and falshood were defaced.

And let me entreat you to recollect, how essential to your happiness it is, that these foes be cast out—these evil loves, affections, and dispositions overcome. They are by our Lord called *foes*, because they rob the mind of *peace*, tranquility, pleasure, happiness; they plunge it into sorrow, trouble, pain, and woe. What man in his senses would, therefore, encourage such enemies?

Secondly,

Secondly, You will remember, that regeneration consists in a purification from evils; and that the Lord is called a regenerator and redeemer, because he purifies the mind from evil and falshood, and delivers from those infernal spirits with whom we have associated. Therefore, be it our care to co-operate with the Lord, by turning *from* and giving up whatever we know to be evil in *life, affection, and practice*. By so doing, our foes will be cast out, and our house, or mind, be filled with all heavenly graces, virtues, and affections. Love to God, charity to man, and faith in the word, will become fixed principles—these, with all their train of heavenly virtues and graces, will be the *friends of our own household*, from which all celestial beatitudes will proceed; we shall become forms of love and wisdom, and our minds will be stored with innumerable blessings—everlasting delights and pleasures. And when this is the case, we shall have no external foes to fear—the Lord will be our defence and guide—by his holy Spirit fit us *for*, and by his divine mercy bring us *to*, his own kingdom of joy, peace, and rest; where *foes* can never come—where love and friendship ever reign—and where all will be tranquility, felicity, and happiness, for evermore.

SERMON

SERMON V.

ON THE DIVINE COMPASSION OF OUR LORD.

MARK i. 39, 40, 41.

And he preached in their synagogues, throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils. And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will—be thou clean.

IT is but too plain that in all ages, since the corruption of the world by sin, men have been more sensible *of*, and more affected *with*, bodily diseases, than with *spiritual* ones; and as they have more sensibly *felt* them, they have consequently been more anxious for their cure and removal, than they have been for those disorders of the mind which are a thousand times more grievous, and dreadful in their

their consequences. So we observe, when our divine Lord appeared in the flesh, and the people began to hear that he healed bodily complaints, they flocked to him in vast multitudes, in order to receive the benefits of his healing hand. But they were much less solicitous to have the disorders of their minds healed—to be spiritually made whole and sound. They considered not (nor is it considered now by many) that there is no bodily complaint to which the human frame is incident, but what corresponds to some *spiritual disorder of the soul*. All afflictions and maladies of the body, are but so many external appearances of those maladies which the mind is subject to, labors under, or has been afflicted with.

And if we were acquainted with spiritual things, and the *science of correspondences*, as the ancients were, we should see in all our bodily complaints their corresponding spiritual ones; and, consequently, be the *most anxious* to have those spiritual ones, which are as the CAUSES, removed—that the EFFECTS, or bodily ones, might be removed also. The spiritual world, first, is the world of *causes*, and the natural world, the world of *effects*. Nothing, therefore, does exist in the natural world but what has its cause in the *spiritual*.

This, I doubt not, is a *new idea* to some of you; nevertheless it is a TRUE one: and I could wish you all to be acquainted with it, as it would open to your minds many wonderful arcana, relative to the
soul

soul and spiritual things. You may suppose this subject is *altogether philosophical*, and not immediately connected with religion and divinity—but this is *not* the case. It has an immediate and important connexion with religion, because it hath so with the mind and our spiritual life. But I must not dwell upon it now.

As our blessed Lord was preaching throughout Galilee, and casting out devils, there came to him a *leper*. Lepers in those days, and among the Jews, were more frequent than in our days, and among christians; and it appears that a very solid reason might be given for it. The *leprosy* was a disorder on the external of the body, consisting of a *dry white scab*, or scurf, whereby the skin became scaly, like a fish. It was a very *troublesome* and *unclean disease*, concerning which many laws were given, as you may see in Leviticus, Numbers, &c. The leper was not to be in the camp of Israel, nor in the congregation, until he were cleansed:—it was also a *contagious, infectious disease*.

Now such a *poor, unclean, afflicted leper* came to the Lord, beseeching him, kneeling down before him, and said, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me “clean.”

The man believed in the power of the Lord, and he came to him in humility and prayer. Jesus, *moved with compassion*, put forth his hand, touched him, and said, “I will—be thou clean;” and immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he
was

was cleansed. I might here shew the correspondence of this filthy, unclean disease, with the state of man as an individual, and with the church as to spiritual things ;—but I have chosen these words with design to illustrate another subject. However, a few words may not be unprofitable upon the above heads.

As the leprosy was an *external* disorder, from an *internal* cause ; so it corresponds to the *external* life of man. Men who are in the love of evil and falsehood, more or less manifest that evil in *external life*. This spiritual leprosy is evident in their words, their actions, and general conduct ; *filthy discourse, unjust actions, and abominable practices*, are daily seen upon them. The disorder is contagious, and thousands are polluted thereby ; and if you would be preserved from this spiritual infection, this unclean and destructive plague, keep as much as possible from those who have it upon them ; that is to say, from all those whose conversation is *filthy, unclean, lascivious, and impure*, whose actions are *immoral, unjust, and sinful* ; whose conduct in general is *profane, irreligious, and evil*.

All such have the plague of sin upon them—the *leprosy* is *obvious*—and if you would be preserved from it, keep at a distance from such polluted characters. The same may be said of a church, whose members are in the *evil of life*, whose doctrines are false, and upon the face of whose creeds the traditions, inventions, and dogmas of men appear.—
Here

Here is a *spiritual leprosy*, a *religious infection*, and all who connect themselves therewith will, more or less, have this plague upon them. As *men*, we should keep from all *immoral, unhallowed, and filthy characters*; and, as professing *christians*, from all *evils of life, false doctrines, human inventions, and traditions*; that so we may neither have a *leprosy evil will*, a *leprosy corrupted understanding*, or a *leprosy irreligious life and conduct*. I may here address every one of you in the language of Paul to Timothy, "KEEP THYSELF PURE."

But I will now proceed to the *subject* for which I made choice of these words, and that is, *the divine compassion of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus was MOVED with compassion*.

We have often observed (and you well know, my christian hearers) that *one essential* part of true religion is, *that we love our neighbour as we love ourselves*. And it is impossible we can possess this charity, if we have not *compassion, mercy, and pity*. Let us first consider how this divine virtue was manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the instance before us, here is a *poor, filthy, defiled leper*, comes and kneels before the Lord, saying, 'Pray, 'fir, have compassion on me—look upon my affliction—behold how much I suffer—I am cast out 'from the converse of men—*despised* by all—every 'one flies my presence, lest they contract the disease '—Have mercy upon me!—If thou wilt, thou canst 'make me clean.' What was our Lord's reply? Did

Did he say, 'Wretch, begone from my presence! —I am thy God!—against *me* thou hast sinned—' thou deservest this affliction—bear it still—let it 'prey upon thy flesh, contaminate all thy blood, 'and spread all over thy body till thou art *one mass* of rottenness and putrefaction. Wear out thy 'life in pain, sorrow, and despair.' Did our Lord thus address this *miserable*, this *suffering object*? No, sirs, no! But suppose such a poor distressed object were to come to the door of some opulent christian—some proud, haughty gentleman, or lord, whose heart is *steeled* to compassion and pity; what would he say?—how would he address him?—Why probably thus:—'Begone from my presence! 'thou filthy, polluted dog, begone!'—He falls on his knees, and with tears distilling down his grief-worn cheeks, he says:—'Dear sir, take pity on 'me—give me a place in thy stable, and send some 'kind hand to bind up my wounds, and alleviate 'my woes.' But lo, he calls his servants:—'Take 'the wretch from my sight—drive him from my 'gates, and let the miscreant die!'

Perhaps, sirs, you will say, that cruelty like this in human hearts can never dwell. In *yours*, I trust, and believe, it does not; but that it does in too many we shall shortly prove. Well how then did our Lord address and receive this poor leprosy object? Why, sirs, HE WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION!—He melted at the sight of *human woe*!—He felt for his infirmities—he put forth

forth his *pure, kind, and blessed* hand—*deigned* to touch the polluted leper—and said, ‘I will heal thee—I will not only alleviate thy sorrow, but I will totally remove it. *Be thou clean.* Go thy way whole and sound. I have compassion on thee—I pity thee. And although thou art a poor, distressed, filthy object, infinitely below me, yet I feel tenderness towards thee; *I love thee—be thou clean.*’ “And immediately his leprosy departed from him and he was healed.”

O what divine compassion is here displayed in our adorable Lord God and Saviour! Methinks, while I repeat the circumstance, every one of you feel the tender virtue in your own breasts, and are saying, *O how godlike is compassion! how amiable, how heavenly is mercy to the distressed!*

Again, as Jesus went out of Jericho, with his disciples, and a great number of people, Bartimeus, a poor *blind* beggar, sat by the high-way side, *begging*; and when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.” Jesus commanded him to be called, and said unto him, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? He says, Lord that I might receive my sight!” As soon as his petition was made, it was answered—the Lord restored him to his sight immediately, and he followed Jesus in the way. (Mark 10 and latter end). Here, sirs, you see a *poor blind beggar* was not too mean an object for the Lord’s notice; mean

and despised as he was, the Lord repulsed him not: but in the language of the deepest compassion and mercy, says, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" "Whatever it is *that is for thy good*, that 'can give thee relief, or make thee happy, *that I am ready to do most freely*; make thy request—' though I am thy Lord, yet my ear is open to thy 'complaint—my heart is full of compassion and 'tenderness. Say what thou wouldst have done, 'and it shall be done for thee.' What a wonderful example of tenderness and pity!

Again—when the two pious sisters, Martha and Mary, had lost a loving and affectionate brother, Jesus, though at a distance, knew their affliction. Many of the humane Jews came to the house of these good women to condole with them—to comfort them concerning the loss of their brother. Probably they did all they could to pour the balm of consolation into their wounded bleeding hearts; but they could do no more than pity and console—than mingle their tears with those of the sisters. But behold the compassionate Lord goes (with his disciples) to Bethany. Martha and Mary meet him—Mary falls down at his feet, and says, "Lord, "if thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also "weeping, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled, "and said, Where have ye laid him? They say "unto him, Lord, come and see! *Jesus wept!* "then said the Jews, Behold how he loved "Lazarus.

“Lazarus. But lo, they come to the grave, and
 “Jesus says, Lazarus come forth.” He rose from
 the dead—was restored to the arms of his loving
 and beloved sisters—and their heavy sorrow was
 changed into transports of joy.

But, first, time would fail me to only mention the
 many instances of divine compassion and tenderness
 which are recorded in the holy word, concerning
 the Lord Jesus Christ. However, there is *one*
 which I *must not*, I *cannot*, leave unnoticed. In-
 deed it comprehends in it all that I have said, and
 all that can be said, upon compassion and mercy.
 I mean that most astonishing work, the REDEMPTION
 OF MANKIND. In this grand work we behold, as
 it were, the *ne plus ultra* of condescension and
 pity. The Lord God our Saviour descends as
 low as mercy can descend—His compassion reaches
 the *lowest, most abject, most vile, and most miserable*
 state, his rational creatures could possibly sink
 into; and his unwordable kindness raises them
 to the highest, most glorious, and most happy
 state, it is possible for them to enjoy. Here we
 may truly say, “His mercy raiseth the BEGGAR
 “from the *dungbill*, to set him among princes;
 “to make him inherit the throne of glory.” Here
 we behold the compassion of our God extending to
 every fallen man—reaching every *case* of wretch-
 edness and woe—grasping *all our species*—and
 leaving no one under ruin and misery, save those
 who obstinately refuse to accept his kindness. And

what renders the divine tenderness and compassion the more conspicuous and wonderful, is, that this almighty and infinitely glorious God, did actually descend into this world—took upon himself our *nature*—became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—passed through temptations and conflicts no pen can describe—died upon the cross—descended into the grave—rose again from the dead—and glorified his humanity. And all for this most merciful end, that mankind, fallen rebellious mankind, might be restored from their wretchedness and misery, and be perfectly happy with him for ever.

Thus, sirs, you observe how fully, how powerfully, God himself hath manifested this *divine virtue*. What an example of tenderness and pity he hath set us! In what numberless instances he hath shewn his compassion, and thereby taught us to imitate him. “Be ye merciful, even as your heavenly Father is merciful.” I might also lay before you many instances, from the word, of mercy and tenderness exhibited by our fellow men. But one shall suffice. “When Jesus entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a Centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my *SERVANT* lieth at home sick of the palsy; *grievously tormented*. I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof—speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” This man, it appears, was a *Roman*—an officer in the army—a captain.

captain. He had soldiers at command; he said to one, Go, and he went—and to another, Come, and he came. And I wonder not at it, for what servant would not cheerfully obey so kind a master. Well, this Roman officer, this man of honor and authority, condescends to come himself to Jesus Christ; he pleads and prays for help. But for who? For his friend, his brother, his child, or his wife? No, he pleads and prays for his *servant*. Perhaps it might be his meanest *servant*; yea, I know not but it were a NEGRO SLAVE. ‘Lord, my *servant* ‘is sick—he has the palsy—he is *grievously tormented*. I have spared no expence—the physicians ‘cannot heal him. I cannot do it myself, but I am ‘grieved for him. He is my servant, it is true; ‘but he is my *fellow creature*. He is as sensible ‘of pain as I am. I feel pity and compassion for ‘him. Lord, say the word—unworthy as I am, ‘let me not be denied! my *servant* is tormented, ‘and my heart bleeds for him. Though an officer ‘in the Roman army, and not afraid to meet death ‘in ten thousand awful forms, to protect my prince ‘and my country, yet, Lord, I have the feelings ‘of a man—my heart melts at *human woe*—I cannot bear that my *servant* should suffer, if help ‘can be found. Lord Jesus, thou God of tenderness and mercy, deign to hear me and heal my ‘suffering servant!’ “Go thy way, saith the “Lord, thy servant is healed. Jesus *marvelled*,

“and said, I have not found so great faith, no not
“in *Israel*.” Matt. viii. ver. 5 to 13.

My fellow christians, what an example is here of compassion and tenderness! I am sure you must feel pleasure in the recital of so much kindness and pity. Do we not, therefore, plainly see how essential this heavenly virtue is, to christianity? Can we lay claim to the name of christian, if we have it not? Can we love our neighbour as we love ourselves, if we are not men and women of compassion, mercy, and kindness? No, we well know we cannot. But, first, do we not most evidently see a great want of this soft and amiable, this heavenly godlike virtue? Had we true charity—did we love others as we love ourselves—we should labor to alleviate the sorrows and woes of men—to sweeten the bitter draught that thousands are compelled to drink—to ease the pains, and heal the calamities of all, as far as we have power. How many poor, wretched, miserable objects of want, and pain, and woe, may we find, on whom to exercise our benevolence and pity! It is with pleasure that we behold, in a general way, how much mankind in our age are humanized; a more liberal generous spirit appears to pervade the nations—*intolerance* and *persecution* are skulking into their infernal dens, and hiding their hated heads in oblivion shades. Mercy and compassion, those godlike graces, which too seldom have been seen, are now appearing on the

the earth—not as visitants for a day, but as constant guests.

And, I am persuaded, a glorious and numerous people are arising under the auspices of the Lord Jesus our God—in whom every christian virtue, every heavenly grace, shall *beam conspicuous and resplendant*, as the bright luminary of the skies, in all his meridian glory. Let us, with pleasing joy, anticipate the day when christians shall be *christians*—when the disciples of Jesus shall follow their Lord—when his children shall imitate their heavenly father in love, charity, mercy, and compassion.

My christian friends, let me recommend to you the *cultivation* and *exercise* of that *grace* of which we have been speaking; I mean, pity, tenderness, or compassion. Let the virtues which bless the human race and enlighten the world, be *most eminently* seen in those men and women who acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as *God alone*—believe in his second appearing—and that he is now establishing a glorious *pure* church, which shall be the crown of all churches, and stand for ever. We already see many convincing proofs of that divine influence which hath spread itself through the world, since the commencement of this dispensation; and especially in Europe, the spirit of freedom, liberty, benevolence, and mercy, has manifestly increased. How many thousands are there, even in Great Britain, whose hearts bleed for the miseries, sorrows, and pains of Afric's sable sons, bound fast in

iron chains—groaning beneath the weight of oppression—and sinking down to shades of death, under the savage hand of cruelty! What numbers of *feeling hearts* are *concerting*, and anxiously longing for the *emancipation* of those helpless captives! Compassion's tears are daily shed by thousands in our land, for those poor, tortured, beaten, punished men and women, whose fate it is to labor and toil in the galling chains of slavery. The voice of pity, mercy, and tenderness, ascends to heaven from ten thousand tongues, in the language of the Roman centurion—'Lord God of heaven! our *servants* lie sick on yonder *friendless* shore, and
'GRIEVOUSLY TORMENTED. Not one nor two
'only, but thousands and thousands there, are
'suffering excruciating woe, *and nameless sorrows*.
'We deplore their fate—the tears of pity flow—
'we exert ourselves for their deliverance. Speak
'the word, and our servants are healed—our slaves
'are delivered. We will rejoice in their emanci-
'pation—and Afric's bleeding sons shall unite with
'us, in humble, grateful, thankful songs to *their*
'*deliverer—their God and ours.*'

But, sirs, our God *doth* hear—and he will save those hapless victims of cruelty, pain, and bondage. The time, I doubt not, will soon arrive, when mercy's hand shall have set these captives free—when the galling iron chain shall no longer bind the slave—and when the fable negro shall triumph in the liberty of the fairer Briton! May that time
quickly

quickly come!—may our utmost endeavours hasten it!—and may the pity and compassion of our christian hearts extend as far as Africa, and melt down all the chains that ever bound a slave!!

But, my christian friends, to conclude this subject, let me recommend to you *all*, in *all cases*, and with *all descriptions of persons*, to *manifest*, to *cultivate*, to *exercise*, this godlike virtue of COMPASSION. You have seen the unspeakable pity of the Lord Jesus Christ to *you*, to *sinners*, to all mankind. Moved with compassion, he cleansed the leper—moved with compassion, he fed five thousands souls at one time—moved with compassion, he healed all bodily and spiritual diseases—and, moved with compassion, he redeemed our souls, bore with our infirmities, saves us from our cruel enemies, leads us through every difficulty and sorrow, and at length will bring us (if we love and serve him) to thrones of *glory, honor, peace, and joy*; where, in his own presence and kingdom, we shall be happy for ever and ever.

Be ye merciful, even as your heavenly Father is merciful. Be *kind, tender, compassionate, and loving* to *all*—your *enemies* or *friends*—your *neighbours* or *relations*—your *domestics* and *servants*. Remember the Roman captain—“*My servant lieth sick at home!*” Imitate him—excel him if you can!—Come as near as possible to the divine example of your Lord and Saviour!

This

This *grace* to ev'ry christian virtue join,
And in *compassion* NEVER FAIL to shine;
Be kind, and tender, full of meekness, love,
And live below as angels live above.
To aid the *sons of grief* exert your power,
The mourning victim blefs, in *sorrow's hour*;
To check the *tide of woes*, do all you can—
And be at once, the CHRISTIAN and the MAN.
Great your reward while here will surely prove,
And soon 'twill be, an *endless heav'n of love*!

SERMON

SERMON VI.

THE TRUE NATURE AND PLEASURE OF RELIGION.

MATT. xi. 30.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

I AM inclined to believe there is hardly any one thing in the world, which mankind are more mistaken in, than *real religion*; nor is any subject represented in more different and contrary points of view, than this is. The principal cause of these mistakes and false representations, is (in my judgment at least) that men have entertained very wrong conceptions of God himself, who is the author of all true religion. They have formed ideas of him according to the bare letter of the word,
without

without entering into the true spiritual and internal meaning thereof. And when our ideas are merely confined to the letter only, we may easily confirm ourselves in the most palpable errors and false doctrines. For, in some places of that word, *wrath*, *vengeance*, *anger*, and *fury*, are predicated of Jehovah; in others, that he is all *meekness*, *compassion*, and *love*.

Now we know that the Lord our God cannot be both the one and the other of these. But in different parts of the word he is represented as he appears to men, according to the state they are in—and this for wise and good purposes; that hereby they may repent of their evils, and live. So when a man reads the word, who is under the power of evil—filled with every lust and abomination—he considers God as a being of *wrath* and *vengeance*; because his own nature is such, that he apprehends fury and wrath will be poured out upon him. And, indeed, the heat of divine love itself appears as wrath and vengeance to the ungodly man; because it is directly opposite to that infernal love in which he dwells—insomuch, that were such a man to approach the divine sphere of heavenly love, it would be to him as a consuming fire; he would be tortured and tormented by it—so very opposite is hellish love to heavenly love.

But again, even men of religion have formed to themselves ideas of the Almighty, which are directly contrary to his nature and perfections; and conse-

consequently *that* religion which is founded upon those ideas, must be consonant to the ideas themselves. What I chiefly allude to is, the notion of a trinity of Gods, or persons in the Godhead; and that one person, or God, came down to appease the wrath and anger of another; together with the opinion, that God is a partial being.

Now under such views of God, it is impossible but religion should be represented in a very disagreeable light. But my design is not to enlarge upon these subjects now; suffice it to say, we form no such conceptions of the Divine Being. We are convinced from reason and scripture, that *God is one*, in one divine person—that he is an impartial God—has no wrath or anger to appease, but is *love itself* in its very essence, full of mercy, goodness, and truth. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is this God, the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, and is (as in the verse preceding our text) *meek and lowly in heart*; that is, infinitely condescending and kind to his creatures—easy of access—ready to teach—willing to save and make happy all that come unto him. And also that his yoke is easy, and his burden light.—My design in making choice of these words, is to represent unto my hearers
THE TRUE NATURE AND PLEASURE OF RELIGION.

I shall, first, drop a few words as to the NATURE of it, and then attempt to prove and describe its pleasures; or the true happiness derived from it.

And first, As to the nature of religion.

We

We all know that every part of it is from God; he is the sole author of all that is good and true; and whatever is FROM him, must be LIKE him. If God is love, religion is love; if God is good, religion is goodness; if God is truth, religion is truth; and if God be the essence of all happiness and felicity, religion abounds with happiness and felicity. If God is at an infinite distance from all that is evil and miserable, religion can have nothing in it that is *evil*, or *tends to misery*. Hence we see the true nature of religion is *love, truth, and goodness*; and the whole of it is included in loving the Lord our God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength—and our neighbour as ourselves.

This love to God, constrains us to do his will, and walk in his commandments; and this love to our neighbour, engages us to act uprightly, honestly, faithfully, and to do unto all men as we would have them do unto us. This is that yoke of the Lord which is easy, and that burden which is light. And yet, alas, how few do we find who are willing to take this yoke, and bear this burden! Nay, indeed, we have every reason to examine our own souls as to this matter. We may easily deceive ourselves. It is one thing to profess and maintain that religion consists in love to God, charity to man, and true obedience to the divine laws; and it is another thing to possess that love to God, which constrains us to walk in all his laws and ordinances blameless: and *that* love to man as disposes us to be

be honest, faithful, kind, benevolent, and charitable—that constrains us to do them all possible good—to be careful that we do not injure them in their persons—in their property—or in their character. To speak no evil of them—circulate no reports, nor raise any to their prejudice—believe nothing of them that is evil, without full proof—vindicate them against the tongue of malice and envy—bear with their failings in love—pity their weaknesses—overlook their faults—forgive any injuries—and return good for evil—and even to love them *as we love ourselves*. All this is implied in loving our neighbour, and indeed much more. But do we come up to this? It is a *very light* burden, yea, it is a most easy and pleasant one. But do we bear it? Can we appeal to our own hearts and lives, and say—*thus* we love God and our neighbour? If we cannot, we have but little true religion; at most, we only have it in the understanding, but not in the will.

Before I proceed to set before you the pleasure and happiness of that religion which is of God, I would earnestly call upon you, and upon my own soul too, to inquire whether or not we actually possess it, and live under the influence of it. This is a matter of the greatest moment, and I hope we shall not deceive ourselves in it. It is an inquiry we are bound to make, and we may satisfy ourselves if we think good. For this divine principle of love and charity changes all the mind, renews the whole man,

man, destroys the love of self, of evil, and the love of dominion. It subdues our pride, our lust, our passions, and makes us humble, lowly, meek, and self-abased. In short, it is a new birth from sin to righteousness; from hell to heaven; and from Satan unto God. All things become new—new will, new understanding, and new life. Heaven formed in the soul, all its powers in willing subjection to Jesus Christ, and all the conduct, love, goodness, and truth.

This is the man of religion, the child of God, the heir of immortality and endless glory. Such may every one be, who is now before the Lord! Then, what I have to say further on the pleasures of religion, will be, I trust, edifying, animating, and profitable.

In speaking upon this most delightful subject, it may not be improper to contrast the state of the *irreligious* man with the religious one. Of this character we may most of us form a pretty accurate judgment, because we may have been more or less in it ourselves; as well as that the scriptures so plainly describe it. The wicked man is by that book, compared to the troubled sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up mire and dirt. And further, as descriptive of his internal state, it is said, “The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, “the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and “thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and “brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be
“ an

“ an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.
 “ The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with
 “ the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall
 “ cry to his fellow; the shrich-owl also shall rest
 “ there, and find for herself a place of rest. There
 “ shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and
 “ hatch, and gather under her shadow : there shall
 “ the vultures also be gathered, every one with his
 “ mate.” Isa. xxxiv. 11 to 16. All these expressions are not only *figurative* ones, to express the state of the wicked man, but also real correspondences of his state. For every noxious, poisonous, hurtful, and filthy animal, vegetable, and the like, corresponds to certain evils, lusts, and abominations in the heart and life of man. So a decayed, broken down, and ruinous palace, where all these filthy birds of night, serpents, and satyrs dwell, briars and nettles grow ; fitly represents and corresponds to ruined, fallen man, whose soul is filled with all uncleanness, evil, and abomination ; in consequence of which he is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up mire and dirt.— Is it possible that a man who has departed from God, the only source of all that is good and happy, and has given himself up to the power and influence of infernal spirits—to every sinful lust, passion, and temper—is it, I say, possible that such a man can enjoy true pleasure ? No, his own pride, self-will, lusts, covetousness, unruly passions, irregular dispositions, are as so many vultures and dragons, preying

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upon

upon his soul, and destroying all his peace and pleasure.

Have we not daily proof of the madness, rage, inquietude, and distress, that men are plunged in by the love of evil, and the indulgence of their infernal tempers? Some are tormented with envy, others burnt up with lust; some destroyed by intemperance, others consumed with avarice and pride; some are eaten up with revenge, and others sink in despair; thousands weary of life, and yet dread the thought of death and eternity: many harassed and distressed by disappointment in their evil intentions, put an end to their lives, and thus plunge themselves into still keener and deeper woe. Neither health, wealth, friendship, or honor, can sooth their tortured minds, or blunt the sting of evil—still, like the troubled sea, they cannot rest. There is no peace, saith our God, to the wicked; they cast up mire and dirt: all their pleasures are filthy as the *mire*, all their joys vile as the dirt beneath their feet. They are departed from the fountain of good—fallen from the order and life of heaven—sunk into *evil, disorder, confusion, and woe*. If joy seems to smile upon the countenance, sorrow corrodes the heart; if wit and mirth sparkle for a moment, it is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—and heaviness of soul succeeds. Such is the state of that man who is a stranger to God and true religion. And if this be his state even in this world, what *must* it be, what *will* it be, in the

the next? Again, if you consider the fruits of wickedness in mankind, as members of society, or as heads of families, what a picture of distress and misery is presented to our view? Quarrels, divisions, envyings, hatreds, poverty, distresses, and unnumbered ills, are the *sure* attendants, the *inseparable* concomitants of an evil heart, and an irreligious life.

If you consider these characters in their hopes, their fears, and their prospects, all is gloominess and dismay. Their hopes are blasted in a moment—their fears come upon them like an armed man—and their prospects are dark, as nightly shades. Neither time, death, nor eternity, can exhibit one *real* and *truly* pleasing object to the mind of that man who loves not God, nor keeps his commandments. In short, every thing is gloomy as the darkest shades of night—awful as the *decayed, ruined, desolated palace*—horrid and disgusting as the *owl*, the *vulture*, the *satyr*, and the *dragon*—and dreadful as the *infernal regions* themselves. “There is “no peace to the wicked, saith our God.”

Now if this be a true picture of those who have *no real religion*, but are living an evil life; how strange, how astonishing is it, that men in general should be so fond of it—so closely attached to it. And if true religion stands in direct opposition to this life, and it surely does, how much is it to be desired and sought after! We have already described what true religion is—and it remains to consider

its pleasures, in a *positive* point of view. And in doing this we have reason, scripture, and experience for our guide. For reason alone will convince us, that the *best* life is the *happiest* life; or that to be *good* is to be *happy*. Hence the heathens, who were without the light of revelation, recommended a life of virtue and goodness, and particularly described the pleasures thereof. There are many beautiful thoughts of this kind in the writings of Seneca, as well as in others of the heathen writers. And the word of the Lord, in numberless places always represents the pleasing happy state of the religious man. David says, "a day in the courts of the Lord is better than a thousand elsewhere. That he had rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness." "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." Psa. xxxii. 11. "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Psa. cxliv. 15. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. xxxv. 10.

In such language as this, the holy word describes the happiness and pleasure of the truly religious man. His internal state is described as a state of *peace, quietness, tranquility*. And why? Because he

he is no longer under the influence of infernal spirits, nor subject to self-will, lust, pride, unruly passions, envy, hatred, love of the world, &c. &c. but all his understanding is directed by truth—his affections influenced by love—he is humble, meek, lowly minded—he is contented and resigned. He is in association with angels of heaven—has conjunction with the Lord himself—and is no longer under the love, the power, or practice of what is evil. He feels an inward and inexpressible pleasure in obedience to divine laws; in being sober, just, faithful, charitable, and holy. These virtues bring their own reward along with them, and a consciousness of the *divine approbation* affords more solid satisfaction and joy than ten thousand worlds can give. And as the internal state of the religious man is a pleasurable one, so is his external. The good man is *cheerful, lively, and animated*—he does not hang down his head like a bulrush—nor does *melancholly* sit on his brow—he is neither foolishly cheerful on the one hand, nor mopish and fullen on the other—but he is *placid, serene, and happy*. You may read the heaven that is in his soul, in his words, his looks, his deportment, and conduct. You can hardly be in his company but you feel the influx of *peace* and *pleasure* from his *sphere*.

○ As a *member of society*, the good man diffuses happiness all around him—he is happy himself, and he longs to make others the same—he is a good subject, ever seeking the good of his prince, and of

his country.—He is a good citizen, and a good neighbour—he laments to see any one miserable, and does all that he can to alleviate the distresses of all—he is not like the man of the world, who wishes to engross all happiness and pleasure to himself—no, his desire is to communicate bliss to others, and the *more* he can do that, the more exquisite is his own joy—he loves his neighbour as he loves himself, and this is the *proof* he gives of that love; namely, a continual endeavour to make his neighbour *as happy as himself*. Indeed, it is from *this love*, this *pure charity*, that heaven is what it is. There *all* is love, and *each one* is happy in contributing to the happiness of *the whole*.

Again, if we consider the good man, or woman (for I include both) as the *head of a family*, as *parent or governor*—his house is a *mansion of peace*, the residence of *pleasure and joy*—quarrels, strife, confusion, and disorder, are known not in his dwelling; but *peace, order, and love*, abide in his house—his own example, instruction, and conduct, inspire his whole family with the love of religion and virtue—and all that are around him call him *blessed*.

Further, consider the religious mind as to his *fears*, his *hopes*, and his *prospects*; and how different here from the ungodly man! He fears God. But how? With the fear of a child. That is, he so fears him, as not willingly to *offend*. All his care is to obey and serve his God. He knows that all his happiness, peace, and pleasure, are alone from God,

God, his father and friend; and gratitude impels him to do his will. But he neither fears death, judgment, or eternity—these he can contemplate with *composure*, with *pleasure*, yea, with nameless *rapture*. He knows he *dies*, but *to live*—shall stand in judgment, to be *rewarded*—and eternity will crown all his joys. His hopes and expectations are founded upon the unalterable word and promises of the Lord his God. They support him under every conflict and trouble of life; he knows they cannot fail him, because God is true and faithful. Therefore, as the apostle says, “Hope is an anchor to the soul, both *sure* and *steadfast*.”

Such is the *hope* of the religious man; and how great must be the consolations derived from it!—And as to his *prospects*, how noble, how exalted are they all!—In this world he neither wishes for honor, wealth, or possessions—with what Providence has given him he is contented. But in the next world he expects “what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; yea, what has never entered into the heart of man to conceive.” He knows that “in the presence of God is *fulnes* of joy, and at his right hand there are *pleasures for evermore*.” There is hardly a page in the bible but what raises his expectation, and fills him with joy; the more he contemplates the eternal state, the more is his soul elated with rapture and bliss. And could we follow the truly religious man into the eternal world—could we behold him in that celestial state just as

he is—could we view his internal and external life—we should see him stand a pure, spotless form of love and charity—all within the mind, *heaven, peace, tranquility, and joy.* We should see him in the *presence* of his beloved LORD GOD and SAVIOUR—surrounded with angelic forms of love, excellence, and beauty—associated with them, partaking of their felicity, uniting with them in all the infinitely delightful exercises of that kingdom—dwelling in a mansion erected by the hand of omnipotence and wisdom—and ten thousand times ten thousand internal and external pleasures perpetually awaiting him, in continual and everlasting succession. In short, we should behold him fully and eternally delivered from all evil, pain, sorrow, and death; and everlastingly in the possession of all *good, rest, joy, peace, life, and pleasure.*

But here *all human language fails*—no tongue can tell, no pencil paint, no heart conceive *THOSE* joys. However, *glorious, great, and infinite* as they are, they are not *too glorious, too great, or too lasting*, for God to give. He hath promised them, and reserved them for every good man and woman; and he will give them to all who are such. Millions of millions are now in the possession of them—thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, constantly entering into possession—and in a very few years, or days, we who are now before the Lord, shall possess them likewise; if we are truly religious men and women.

Now,

Now, my christian brethren, say what you think of religion—is not the yoke of Jesus easy, and his burden light? *Love him—love your neighbour—keep the commandments of your God.* There is your whole duty—this is all the yoke and burden. Is it not a light one? Especially, when you consider what unspeakable pleasures attend such a life. We have seen that the man of no religion, is perpetually unhappy—has no peace, joy, or true pleasure—he lives in trouble, dies in pain, and sinks in woe. But the man of real religion is happy here, cheerful through life—he dies in hope, and rises to a glorious immortality. —

Surely, then, we shall all take the advice of our adorable and merciful Lord. He says “take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” If we have *not* obeyed this injunction, let us do it now; and if we *have*, let us continue in the service of the Lord—and by scripture and experience make ourselves acquainted with the true pleasures of a religious life. I am confident my good friends, that only such a life can make us happy—you know it too. And, therefore, I hope we shall all be united, and with one heart and mind engage in it. Not forgetting that true religion makes us good subjects—good members of society—good neighbours—as well as happy in our own souls. If we abstain from that which is evil, and do that which is good, we must be *useful* in life
to

to all, according to our ability. And the more we are so, the more pleasure shall we feel in our own minds.

Let us daily labor to get free of every evil of heart and life (for that alone is the cause of all misery) and diligently pursue the path of goodness, faith, and love; that we may be filled with the joys and happiness of heaven. And in a very little time we shall find our regeneration compleated—be called away into the eternal world—behold the Lord Jesus our God, whom we have loved and obeyed—mingle with the angels of heaven—enter our mansions of peace and rest—partake the nameless felicities of that blessed world—and enjoy the rewards and pleasures thereof, which our God hath promised (and will then give) through the boundless ages of a happy and joyful eternity! Which may the Lord Jesus grant unto every one of us, for his name and mercy sake. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

THE LAW OF GOD ESTABLISHED;

OR,

**THE DECALOGUE A RULE OF LIFE TO ALL, AND THE
SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF ALL RELIGION.**

MATT. v. 17, 18.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

I AM persuaded there are not any articles in our holy religion, in which mankind have been more mistaken, than in the *nature of divine laws*, and *the redemption of Jesus Christ*; two subjects these which, one would suppose, all christians should be agreed in, however they may differ in other matters

matters—because these appear to be *real fundamentals* of christianity. And, indeed, our Lord's sermon upon the mount (which our text is a part of) has set the first article in so clear and express a light, that one would imagine a close attention to that discourse would set us right in our judgment upon it. For it seems THAT VERY DISCOURSE was chiefly designed to expound to us the *nature* of his divine laws, and our obligations to observe them.

I shall, in speaking from our text, endeavor to shew the *fallacy* of those opinions which are generally maintained concerning the moral law (so called) and the redemption of Jesus Christ. And then attempt to set those subjects in their true and scriptural light.

And here permit me to request not only your *attention*, but your *candor*; for any attempt to refute popular opinions is, confessedly, a disagreeable task; as those persons who maintain them will find themselves more or less hurt by that refutation. Every person, who is sincere and upright in his profession, supposes his own sentiments *right* and *true*; and therefore whatever *opposes* those sentiments, will give him a degree of pain: and the more so, in proportion to his confirmation in those opinions.

Nevertheless, I presume, sincere and upright persons will be willing to hear what may be advanced against THEIR view of things; and with candor and impartiality weigh what may be said on the

the other side the question. Our chief desire should be to *know the truth*—to examine what we hear, with an unbiassed judgment—and to receive whatever appears to us *rational* and *scriptural*, though it may be different from our former view of things. The law of which our Lord is speaking in our text, every one knows, is the *holy law of his word*, and which has commonly been called the *moral law*, or the ten commandments. I say it has been commonly called the *moral law*, I suppose, in distinction from the *ceremonial law*; but although it may be called *moral*, yet it appears to be *spiritual* and *celestial* also—as it comprehends in it every part of our duty both to God and man; and therefore it is in itself immutable and unchangeable. Now it is generally believed that the Lord, when he took upon him our nature, and came to redeem mankind, came also to abrogate, or set aside that law; and that although the first ages, and the Jews, were under it, yet since the coming of the Lord *we* are not under it: for they say it is a *legal bondage*, a *covenant of works*, and in itself *impracticable*. That men before the fall had power to keep it, but since the fall no man has that power; and that it is utterly impossible that it should be kept by man. Yet they say that God, as the lawgiver, has an undoubted right to command and require his creatures to observe that law; and in consequence of their breaking it, to consign them to hell, and endless misery. But it is maintained

tained that Jesus Christ came into the world as our *substitute*, to do that for us (in this case) which we could not do for ourselves, and which, if not done for us, we must inevitably perish—consequently, that he fulfilled every *iota* of that law on *our account*, and *in our stead*; that we might be delivered from its condemning power, and exempted from an obedience to its commands: and, therefore, that christians are not now, in any sense, under that law.

And to say that we are still obliged to observe its injunctions, regulate our lives thereby, and walk according to its requisitions, is to bring us back again to Moses—to a legal bondage, and a covenant of works; which they say is subversive of all true christianity, and establishing justification by works, and not by grace. Yea, much farther than this do christians in general go—for it is maintained that Jesus Christ came to make satisfaction to God the Father, on the behalf of men, for their violation of the law; and that he paid the debt due to divine justice, in our stead—suffered the punishment due to our sins, in his own person—atoned thereby divine wrath—thus magnified the law, and made it honorable—fully obeyed every jot and tittle of it for us, and on our account, and in our stead—and that his active and passive righteousness is actually and absolutely imputed to all that believe—by which righteousness the believer is *covered, pardoned, justified*—all his sins are overlooked—that

—that God the Father sees no sin in the believer—and that he is accepted in his sight, through the merit of his Son's righteousness, so imputed to his soul. Consequently, he is no longer under this law, either as a covenant of works, or as a rule of life. It becomes a dead letter, and the evangelical christian has nothing at all to do with it, but is in a much higher state.

And hence they infer, that *redemption* consists in the Lord's standing in the place of the sinner—being punished for the sinner—paying the sinner's debt—obeying the law for him—bearing the wrath and justice of God in his stead—reconciling the Father to his offending creatures—and making them righteous in his own righteousness, so imputed to, and spread over, their sins and their souls; and that the sinner is brought into this state of acceptance and justification, not in consequence of *true repentance, regeneration, love, and obedience*—but simply and alone by a bare instantaneous act of *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteousness. That this faith is the immediate gift of God, without any concurrence or operation on man's part; and that when it has taken place, the man has nothing more to do with the moral law. He is neither condemned by the breach of it, subject to it, nor is it a rule of life to him; yet he will most unaccountably say, that this faith will change the heart, and make the man good and holy.—And hence, if you attempt to recommend a conscientious

scientific regard to the commandments, and say that without *works* we cannot be justified; they will immediately reply, 'Why this is all legality—
' self-righteousness—you are bringing us back again
' to Moses and the law, and destroying our christian
' liberty. You are a pharisee and a workmonger,
' and are setting aside the *atonement*, the *righteous-*
' *ness of Jesus Christ*, and *justification by faith alone!*
' We are not under the law, but under grace.' If
we rejoin, and say, 'But are we not to be holy?'
They will say, 'Yes, we are made so by this
' *faith.*' And thus the whole of redemption and
salvation is resolved into faith alone, and the imputa-
tion of Christ's righteousness.

Now, first, if this be actually the case, and these
are the genuine doctrines of the bible, what a strange
religion ours is? What an uncouth system is chris-
tianity!—Here is God the Father giving laws to
man, which man cannot keep—and yet he burns
with wrath towards them, because they break
those laws; yea, he determines to punish them in
hell for ever, for their disobedience to laws which
they never had power to observe. And here is
Jesus Christ represented as another God, equal with
the Father, coming to discharge men from the ob-
ligations of those laws which his Father has given,
by fulfilling them himself—and at the same time he
tells them that *they must obey them*—that not one
jot or tittle of the law shall fail—that except their
righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and pha-
risees,

risees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven—and that whosoever breaks the least of these commandments, and teaches others so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven—yea, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is said to be imputed to men, in order to exempt them from keeping the laws of God; and to justify them, although they live in the breach of his commandments.

Surely, sirs, these things cannot be true! Men must have strangely mistaken the mind of the Lord, his design in coming, and the nature of his redemption!—It can never be, that the Lord would fulfil a law, in order to give us a licence to break it with impunity; nor can he take us from under those laws which contain our whole duty towards both God and man. If this is redemption, it is such an one as no good man can wish to receive. Doth not the Lord tell us, in our text, “that he did not come to destroy either the law or the prophets, but to fulfil;” that is, to explain their nature, enforce an obedience to them, and give us power to observe them? Let us inquire, for a moment, what the law of God is, and what it requires of us. Doth not the Lord himself tell us, that to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is the sum and substance of all the *decalogue*, or ten commandments? Doth he not tell us, that on *these two* hang all the law and the prophets? He

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doth

doth positively tell us thus much. And is it possible that mankind should at any time, or under any dispensation, be exempted or excused from loving God and his neighbour? If he observe not those duties, can he be called a christian? Is he a man? Is he not rather an infernal? From what source do all the sins and abominations of the world arise, but the want of this love? And will not this love to God and man be the only rule of life, both to men and to angels, through all eternity? And doth not the Lord say, when expounding the nature of the divine law, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you—that YOU MAY *be the children of your Father, which is in heaven.*" Here you find this universal love to our neighbour is made *essentially necessary* to our becoming the children of God—so far was the Lord from setting the law aside.

Certainly, then, we have to do with this law. It is a rule of life, and will be so to us for ever; and Jesus could not possibly come to exempt us from an obedience to it. *This* cannot be redemption. Suppose Jesus Christ had actually fulfilled the divine law in our stead, and for us—had suffered the punishment due to us for the breach of it—could we still be happy, without loving God and our neighbour?

bour? We could not. Then, if we could not be happy, what would redemption be? But to suppose that Jesus Christ came to make satisfaction to the Father's justice, to atone his wrath, pay the sinner's debt, and reconcile the Father to sinners, and that this is redemption—is to suppose what *never did exist*, nor ever can. For this is not only to maintain the existence of two Gods, but also, that the nature of the one is different from the nature of the other; because it is expressly saying, that the Father could not be reconciled to sinners, without *full payment made*—and that his justice and wrath are such, as to admit of nothing less than an adequate and full satisfaction for the sins of men: but that Jesus Christ was so full of mercy, goodness, and compassion, that although his justice demanded satisfaction equal with the Father's, as being *equally God*, yet he would give up that demand, and even condescend to pay the debt due to the Father, and atone his wrath, that sinners might be saved.

Now what is this less than to declare the existence of two Gods, different from each other in their natures—the one *implacable*, the other *placable*—the one *full of wrath*, the other *full of mercy*—the one *severe*, and the other *kind*.

My christian friends, let us relinquish such strange and inconsistent notions. God is ONE, in *essence*, in *nature*, and in *person*. He is kind and loving to all his creatures—he cannot condemn them for not doing that which they are not able to do. He

gives them no laws but he gives them also a power to keep them; but as mankind have abused that power, given themselves up to evil, and to the power and temptations of infernal spirits; it pleased this God of love and mercy to take upon himself our nature—in that nature he subdued the power of hell—opened the way for us to be everlastingly happy—and thus redeemed our souls. He fought against the hells in his own person, conquered the powers of darkness for us, and made salvation possible to all who believe on his name, love him, and obey him. He therefore redeems us from all *iniquity*, destroys the works of the devil, and raises us again to his own image, likeness, and kingdom.

Redemption consists in a deliverance from infernal spirits, and from all evil in heart and life; and by this deliverance only can we enjoy redemption. Our God is a God of holiness and mercy: his creatures had fallen into impurity and misery—for as purity, or goodness, is the alone fountain of all happiness; so impurity, or evil, is the alone fountain of all misery: therefore this God of goodness and mercy came to redeem man from *evil* and *misery*—not to atone divine wrath, for he had none to atone—not to reconcile the Father, or himself, to man, for he is the Father, and ever was reconciled to his creatures. What the Lord came to do, therefore, was not for himself, but for fallen man. All the process of redemption respects the
good

good and happiness of the creature, and was calculated to raise him from death to life—from sin to holiness—from hell to heaven—and from Satan to God. So far was the Lord from coming to abrogate his own laws, or exempt men from an obedience to them, that he came to teach us their nature, their purity, and the absolute necessity of being conformed to them.

It is true that man, as a fallen sinner, under the power of evil, is not of himself capable of obeying those laws; neither is he of himself capable of moving his tongue, or his hand: all power is from the Lord alone. Whatever is spiritual, good, and heavenly, is from him; but then he doth in mercy give to every man, a power and capability of doing whatsoever he commands man to do. This is fully illustrated in the holy word, and in many places. “Behold I give you power to tread
“on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power
“of the enemy.” And in the parable of the pounds, one had ten, another five, another one; every man according to *his several ability*. Nor was he that had but one condemned, because he had not improved *two*, or *five*, but because he had *bid that one* in the earth, and had not improved it.

It is impossible in the nature of things, for God to command us to do that which we have no power to do; because God is both *good*, and *just*, and *wise*. But were we required, on pain of death and misery, to do what we could not do, where would

be his goodness, his justice, or his wisdom? Would any wise and just man so treat his child, his servant, or his slave? No, he would not. Much less, then, can the Almighty God, who is all love, truth, justice, and wisdom.

Now as to this law, of which our Lord speaks in the text—what part of that law is it which we cannot do? Cannot we refrain from murder, theft, adultery, covetousness, false witness? Cannot we love our parents, our neighbour, and our God? Yes, we assuredly can do all this; not of ourselves, independent of the Lord, for without him we can do nothing—but by his assistance we can do all these things. Nay, we absolutely must do them, or we never can be redeemed, and made happy. It is the love of God and our neighbour which constitutes heaven: it is the want of this love, or hatred to God and our neighbour, which constitutes hell. All good and happiness are from the former love, all evil and misery from the latter love;—and can we call the love of God and our neighbour mere *legality*—a *covenant of works*—*legal bondage*? Is it not rather truly spiritual, evangelic, and heavenly? Is it not that very life which every good man would wish to live? And is it not that life which all the angels, and glorified spirits in heaven, live, and will live for ever? Surely we are convinced that it is? Redemption, then, is *all that* which delivers us from a *contrary life*—which puts us in a capacity to live this life—and which actually brings us into the enjoy-

enjoyment of it. But we are not brought into this state, or life, *merely by faith, simple faith, or faith alone*, as it is said; but rather, by the influence of divine love and truth from the Lord, whereby we are led to true repentance, which is the beginning of redemption in man; forsaking of evil, believing on and loving the Lord our God, and sincere obedience to his divine laws.

When this change is wrought in the mind, then we see that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, which was only an *external, hypocritical, and partial* one; and that we must be *internally righteous, actually righteous, and impartially* so: that the laws of God must be engraven on the heart, and fulfilled in the life—that we must depart from all evil, and do that which is good—and that we must do this *as of ourselves*; yet knowing that the power so to do is from the Lord—and that all goodness and truth, faith and love, charity and obedience, arise from the influence of his divine love and truth upon our will and understanding. And here we are enabled to see *most plainly*, that we can keep the laws of God—be actually righteous, both internally and externally—and at the same time we have nothing to boast of as to ourselves; all the power is from the Lord alone, and to him alone returns all the praise and glory for ever and ever.

We are thus led to understand, that the law of God, instead of being abrogated, set aside, and that

we have nothing to do with it; is, on the contrary, the rule of our life—the sum and substance of all religion—that it is spiritual and divine—and that it will be our rule of life and conduct in the other world, and through the endless ages of eternity. Though heaven and earth pass, yet one *iota* or *tittle* of the law shall not fail. “Do we then make “void the law through faith? God forbid—yea, “we establish the law” (says Paul). And hereby we learn, too, how *unnecessary*, and also how *impossible* it is, that the righteousness of Jesus Christ should be *imputed to us*, and *become ours*, that we may be justified.

First, It is *unnecessary*, because the true christian—the man who believes in loves, and obeys the Lord, is actually made righteous. His evils are subdued—his heart and life are changed—he is *regenerated*, *born again*, *made a new man*—in short, he is restored to the image and likeness of his God. He is the *pure in heart*, who shall see the Lord. Therefore, the imputation of another righteousness is *unnecessary*.

But again, the imputation of the Lord's righteousness, is a thing *impossible*. His righteousness is the righteousness of a God—for he is God alone; and *creation*, *redemption*, or *salvation*, might as well be imputed to us as that righteousness. For his righteousness is a thing purely *divine*, and therefore cannot be imputed to any creature. The fact is, that the notion which has prevailed in the christian

christian church, namely, that there are more Gods than one; with a few passages in the holy word (and more particularly in Paul's epistles) wrongly understood, have been the real cause of all these unscriptural and irrational sentiments concerning the *law of God, redemption, imputation, and faith alone*. But I hope the time is come, in which the pious mind will be delivered from the *shackles of tradition*—the bondage of *false doctrine*—and be led to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the one *only God of heaven and earth*. Then will he see that redemption consists in a deliverance from all evil and misery, and a restoration of the soul to real goodness, the image and likeness of God, and the enjoyment of all that is heavenly and divine.

Let me intreat my audience to take into serious consideration what I have laid before you, upon these very important subjects—examine and judge for yourselves—and let enlightened reason and pure truth determine your judgment. I have endeavored to prove that Jesus Christ came, not to atone divine wrath—not to fulfil the law on our account, that we might be exempted from obedience to it—not to reconcile the Father to sinners, and make him placable;—but that he came to deliver us from the power of all evil—to subdue the infernal powers—to redeem us from all iniquity—and to purify unto himself a people, zealous of good works. I have labored to prove, that the law of God is not only moral, but spiritual and divine
—that

—that it is immutable and eternal—that we have power given unto us to observe it—and that to love the Lord with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, is the sum and substance of that law.

May every one of us experience a real redemption from all evil, falsehood, and misery; and a restoration to all that is good, true, and heavenly: then we shall delight in the law of God, after the inward man—and in a little time be translated to that blessed world, where all is love, goodness, and joy, for evermore. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

THE INTERNAL PURIFIED;

OR,

THE REAL MEMBER OF THE LORD'S TRUE CHURCH A HOLY MAN.

ISA. iv. 3, 4.

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

THE latter part of the preceding chapter treats of the vastation and end of the fallen church; in the beginning of this chapter a new church is spoken of, and its quality and character are described in the words of our text. Whoever carefully attends to what is written in the third chapter, must be convinced that it has an internal and spiritual mean-

meaning, and that it cannot be literally understood. The same may be said concerning the chapter before us, for it is said, "In that day shall seven women take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Now, according to the bare letter, what has all this to do with religion? Or how could seven women, by cleaving to one man, take away their reproach? Would they not, by so doing, rather expose themselves to reproach? It must be evident they would. Is it not plain, then, that if the bible is the word of the living God, it must have an internal meaning, a spiritual sense, included in the literal? And can we understand the word, unless we are acquainted with that sense? Is it not necessary that we have some *certain rule and guide* to go by, that we *may know it*? For if we only *conjecture*, and *guess* what it is, we may be *mistaken*, very *widely err*—be at no certainty. But when the *science of correspondences*, in which the word is written, is *known*—and the mind is under illumination from the Lord; then the interior spiritual meaning of divine truth may be understood—its beauty and excellence discovered—and the word of God will appear *AS HIS WORD—divine, celestial, and heavenly*, in every word and letter.

I have observed, that the beginning of this chapter speaks of a *new church*, which should be established after the desolation and end of the former; and

and it is thus described—"In that day *seven* women "shall take hold of one man." By the number seven is always, in the word, meant what is *holy*—by woman is signified the *church*—and by *women* (as here) the *affections*—by one man, is meant *divine truth* in its complex. The meaning, therefore, is, that the good and holy affections of the will, should be united with divine truth in the understanding, and the members of the church shall say, we will eat our own bread; that is, we will appropriate the love and goodness of the Lord, which is the true and living bread, for our souls—we will wear our *own apparel*; that is, we will appear in the garments of righteousness, humility, and charity—only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach: that is, let us not be under the influence of error and falsehood, but principled in heavenly wisdom and genuine truth, as the people of the Lord. "In that "day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and "glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent "and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel;" viz. the branch, or church, engrafted into the Lord, the true vine, shall be principled in goodness and truth—in charity and faith—and all the fruits, the external life, conduct, and walk, shall be *becoming, holy, and heavenly*, with all those true Israelites who had escaped the general desolation of the former wasted and fallen church. And then (as in the words first read) "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called *holy*; even "every

“every one that is written among the living in
 “Jerusalem. When the Lord shall have washed
 “away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall
 “have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the
 “midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by
 “the spirit of burning.”

In speaking from these words we will,

*First, Consider what the Lord will do for his church,
 and all the true members of it.*

Secondly, By what means he will do it.

*Thirdly, Explain who are meant by those left in Zion,
 and remaining in Jerusalem. And,*

Fourthly, Notice their quality and character.

And as I wish, in this discourse, to treat of things that respect our *interior states*, and which are of *essential importance*; so I hope you will give your serious attention, and endeavor to profit by the observations which may be made. For we shall do well to consider that religion, heaven, and happiness, are *internal things*; they respect the *mind*, and must have their residence and existence there.

First, then, we will consider what the Lord will do for his true church and every real member of it. This is signified by washing away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purging the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof.

First, It may be necessary to *explain the terms*, and then enlarge upon the work itself. By *Zion*, is signified

signified the celestial principle of love and charity—by *daughters of Zion*, all the good affections of the will—by *filth*, all kinds of evil—by *washing it away*, is signified the *removal thereof*, and the purification of the will—by *Jerusalem*, is signified the spiritual principle in man, and which relates to the understanding—by *blood*, the falsification of divine truth, and all falsehood and error—by *purging*, is meant the cleansing of the understanding therefrom—and by the *midst*, is signified the inmost of the mind. There are in every man a *natural*, a *spiritual*, and a *celestial* degree, or principle; without which he could not become regenerate, spiritual, and heavenly. But as man has turned, or averted himself from the Lord; so he has turned or averted those principles—his *natural* degree is become *sensual*—his *spiritual*, *earthly*, or *worldly*—and his *celestial*, *evil* and *infernal*. Hence it is, that except we be changed, born again, or regenerated, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. As, therefore, a man examines himself by the word of the Lord, and comes into a state of penitence and faith, he sees that he is in himself nothing but mere *evil*, *falsehood*, and *ignorance*. His will is under the influence of self-love, love of the world, and dominion—subject to every abominable lust, evil propensity, and sensual desire—his understanding in darkness and error—and his whole life depraved and sinful. But as a consciousness of his state excites in him a desire to be delivered from it, and as he wishes to depart from what is evil, in external

ternal life—so he willingly gives up his mind to the Lord who washes him from his filth, or cleanseth him from evils in the internal man; influencing his will, purifying his affections, illuminating his understanding, and regenerating his whole mind. For although man cannot cleanse and regenerate himself, yet he can return to the Lord, by repentance and faith—he can depart from his evil ways—co-operate with the merciful designs of the Lord—and thus prepare himself for the Lord to enter by his divine influx, and regenerate his internal. This power is given to man by the Lord, and he may make use of it to that end. But we will,

Secondly, Consider by what means the Lord effecteth this work. It is said, our Lord will do this, “by the *spirit of judgment*, and by the *spirit of burning*.” By the spirit of judgment is meant, the spirit of *divine truth*. For truth is light—it is truth that discovers to us our evils and falses—it is truth that judges. Hence our Lord says, “the word that I have spoken, that shall judge you in the last day.” Therefore it is called the spirit of judgment. As man, therefore, turns himself to the Lord by meditation, repentance, prayer, and the like, he opens his understanding to the influx of divine wisdom, by which he is illuminated—sees and knows the truth—is convinced of his own ignorance, errors, and falses—is conscious how he has falsified and perverted the word, to justify his own evils; he gives up his mind to the light of divine truth, and his understanding

understanding is purged from error, ignorance, vain reasoning, and false persuasions.

And, secondly, "By the spirit of burning," is meant, the influx of divine love from the Lord, *into the will principle*. It is called the spirit of burning, because as a divine and heavenly fire, it burns up and consumes our lusts, our evil loves, our infernal passions, and affections; our envy, anger, pride, hatred, and every disposition which is contrary to the love of God and our neighbour. As this love enters into the mind, it influences the will, raises the affections to the Lord, begets charity, humility, meekness, and every heavenly virtue. And thus the spiritual degree is opened in the understanding, the celestial degree in the will, and the internal man is washed and cleansed from the filth of infernal loves, vile affections, and evil dispositions. In proportion, therefore, as this work is accomplished in the soul, our regeneration is effected, and we become spiritual and celestial men.

But we proceed, thirdly, to explain, who are meant by those "left in Zion, and those remaining in Jerusalem." By such as are left in Zion, are signified, all such who at the consummation and end of the church, are in a principle of love, or goodness. To illustrate this, we will suppose ANY church, that is really fallen into evils of life and falses of doctrine, inasmuch that it is brought to its consummation and end; nevertheless, there are individuals in that fallen church who are truly in the good of life—who love

God and their neighbour, and walk accordingly—yet, through the general prevalence of ignorance and error, they are in false doctrine—unacquainted with the genuine truths of the holy word. These are they who are left in Zion—they are in a state of goodness, and prepared for the reception of divine light and truth as it appears, and are proper persons to compose the new church of the Lord. And by those who remain in Jerusalem are meant, those in the same fallen church whose spiritual principle is opened—who are in the love of truth—and are thus prepared for the appearing of the Lord. Such characters are saved from the general desolation—are called into the Lord's kingdom, or church, and by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning; that is, by divine truth and love, are washed from their evils, and cleansed from their falses and errors.

Let us, therefore, proceed to notice the *quality and character* of those who are *living members* of the Lord's *true church*.

And first, they are *men of truth*—delivered from falsehood, error, and darkness—no longer under the influence of traditions, human inventions, and false doctrines—but taught of the Lord, illuminated by wisdom from above, and principled in the truths and doctrines of the holy word—being convinced of their own ignorance—not daring to put their trust in man—and thirsting for pure living water—they have given up their understanding to the Lord only; who,

who, by the influx of divine wisdom, has given them to discern between darkness and light, falsehood and truth; between the traditions of men, and the genuine truths of the sacred pages.

Secondly, they are men of *goodness*—washed and cleansed from the filth of self-love, sensuality, lust, hatred, and every abominable evil, by the spirit of burning; by the influx of divine love into their will and affections—so that they are no longer in the love or practice of iniquity, but cultivating every heavenly grace and virtue—pious towards God, faithful towards men, and diligently watchful over their own hearts and lives—principled in the love of goodness—true religion is their life—and their one delight, to do the will of God. Their internal and their external agree, and their outward life corresponds to their internal state.

And, thirdly, they are *men of love and charity*. They love the Lord Jesus Christ with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and from that love they obey him: he is their father, and they are his children. His image and likeness are manifest in them—and all who are acquainted with them, know that they are the sons of God. And O! how great, how heavenly, how divine is religion, when it flows from pure love to God our Saviour! But they are men of charity. They love their neighbour, their fellow men, as they love themselves. Hence they are strangers to resentment, anger, envy, hatred, and pride; they are meek, lowly, and
1 2 humble

humble minded; they take care to injure no one in person, property, or character; but are doing them all possible good, seeking their welfare as they seek their own. The whole world is their country, and all its inhabitants their brothers and sisters—so extensive is their love—so boundless their philanthropy. But again, they are men of *holiness*; by which I mean, a pure scriptural and heavenly disposition and life. A pure principle of goodness dwells in their breast—the laws of God are written on their hearts—and the life of heaven appears in their conduct. Whatever is impure, unchaste, immoral, and vain, they *abhor*; whatever is pure, chaste, and good, they *delight in*. Religion is no task, but a pleasure—no servitude, but perfect freedom. They are good, not from the fear of death, but from a principle of life; in fine, they are men of a *spiritual* and *celestial life*—they are internally and externally the same—they shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. And in Zechariah it is said, “In that day there shall be written upon the bells of the horses, holiness to the Lord—every pot in Judah and Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord.” By which places (and many more) nothing less is signified than that the living members of the Lord’s true church will be persons of the *most exemplary goodness*—patterns of love, charity, and truth—found in faith—holy in life—amiable in character—and the best of christians.

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Permit me, then, to conclude my remarks upon these words, by calling your attention to the import of them, as they respect your own souls. If we are true members of the Lord's church, the text is more or less realized in our own minds. "The filth of the daughters of Zion is washed away"—viz. our affections are no longer in evil; we are not persons of sensuality, pride, lust, self-love—we delight not in what is impure, filthy, beneath the dignity of man, and opposite to the holy laws of the Lord. The spirit of burning, the divine love of the Lord, has operated upon the will, the affections, and burnt up those evil propensities, those infernal loves and lusts, which before governed the internal. It will not be a fruitless or unnecessary work for us, to enter into self-examination upon this head. It is very possible that we may hear the truth, receive it with a degree of warmth, talk much of it, and earnestly recommend it to others; and at the same time we may not be under the influence of divine love—but too much in the affection of evil. If the truth of heaven, the spirit of judgment, hath purged away the blood of Jerusalem—the falsification of truth, error, tradition, and human inventions—be thankful, very thankful to the Lord; but remember, *truth* without *good*, is as *light* without *heat* in the winter season—when nothing grows, but the face of nature is *barren*, and presents an unpleasing picture of sterility. So will it be with thy mind, if thou hast truth only, and art not animated by heavenly love.

Let us ever remember, that the *life* of all religion and goodness is *love*—and *truth* the existence thereof. If love, therefore, be our life; if our affections are raised to the Lord—we love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves; then we shall be men and women of holiness, humility, meekness; every amiable virtue and heavenly grace will flourish upon such a soil, be conspicuous in our life, and adorn our character. Truth by itself is *harsh*, *stubborn*, and *severe*; but *truth* and *love* united, are *mild*, *soft*, and *heavenly*. They soften our rugged nature—subdue our disordered passions—regulate our irregular desires—destroy our self-love and impetuous lusts—and make us pure, holy, and good; yea, they regenerate the whole internal and external man.

The importance of this regeneration you must be sensible of. And I can but intreat every one of you, who embrace the doctrines and truths of this dispensation, to be very solicitous for this full and total renewal of the mind into the image and likeness of your God. We are not only told in the words of our text, what the Lord will do for his Zion, his true church, and what every member of it *shall be*; but we have also every *possible incentive*, every *animating motive*, every *invigorating encouragement*, to become men of love, charity, and holiness. Divine truth is opened to our view—the eternal world displayed—religion and goodness exhibited in inexpressible charms and loveliness—God himself
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made known, and revealed in his nature, attributes, character, and perfections, as infinitely lovely and desirable; the true nature of man, his best interest, his immortality, and future state of existence, fully laid open—and the blessed, heavenly, eternal world, depicted in so clear, rational, and spiritual a light, that every thinking serious mind must cheerfully acknowledge, that the motives and encouragements to goodness and truth, love and charity, faith and purity, are *almost irresistible*.

Since, therefore, we enjoy these peculiar advantages, let us set the best and most amiable example before men. Let us give daily proof that the filth of evil is washed away from our hearts and lives—that falsehood, error, and darkness are purged from the understanding—and that we are the holy people, the living members of the Lord's Jerusalem. In so doing we shall honor his name—advance his truth—promote his kingdom—be useful to mankind—and unspeakably happy in our own souls.

In this blessed and holy manner may we live! and may the members of the Lord's new church, be bright examples to all men of goodness, love, charity, holiness, and every divine virtue. Thus may the kingdom of heaven come into our hearts—his will be done by us as it is done in heaven by angels—and love, purity, peace, and joy for ever reign in his last, best, holy, and happy kingdom. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

THE WORK AND EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ISA. xxxii. 17, 18.

And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

FROM the ninth verse of this chapter to the fifteenth, the prophet is (from the Lord) describing the state of the church. And an unpleasing description is given of it, viz. that it was sunk into *ease* and *carelessness*; the people drew near the Lord with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. And the Lord tells them, that in consequence of such carelessness and inattention to piety

piety and virtue, they should be troubled many years ;—that is to say, they should bear the consequences of their apostacy and declension, until the church was totally vastated of good and truth ; and the Lord visited the land, to establish a new church and kingdom—which he actually did at his first advent.

The state of this people is further described by the *failure* of the vintage, of the pleasant fields, and the fruitful vine. But do not imagine that these things are meant *literally*, as though the vines in their vineyards should yield *no fruit*, nor their fields *corn*—for this is not meant. We see that in all lands, and in all the various states of the people, as to virtue or vice, *seed-time* and *harvest* continue ; and not unfrequently the *worst* of men have the greatest abundance of temporal goods. But as *vineyards*, *fruitful fields*, and the *produce of the earth*, are the support of mankind, as to the body and this life ; so whatever comes from heaven, and flows from the goodness and truth of the Lord, is given for the spiritual support, comfort, happiness, and life of the soul. But when a people are at ease, and grow careless in divine things, then they deprive themselves of those spiritual supports and blessings ;—they become destitute of *divine good*, of *love*, *charity*, *wisdom*, *truth*, and *heavenly science*. They are unfruitful and barren, like the scorched wilderness, and sandy desert ; or, if they are fruitful at all, it is in thorns and briers—as it is said in
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the thirteenth verse, "Upon the land of my people
"shall come up *thorns and briers*." By the land of
the people, is signified the *heart*, the *mind*, the *will*,
and *understanding*; and by thorns and briers, are
meant *evils* and *falses*.

By this, sirs, we see how dangerous it is to
grow *easy* and *careless* in those things which concern
our souls, and our everlasting happiness. The
mind of man is always open to a blessed influence
from the Lord, or to an infernal influence from
Satan; that is, from evil spirits. In proportion,
therefore, as we close the mind to the *former* influ-
ence, we open it to the *latter*, and the consequence
is, that thorns and briers spring up—that is, we
conceive an *affection* for what is evil and false—the
understanding is *perverted*—the will is *corrupted*—
and we call evil good, and darkness light. The in-
fernal influence we admit, *inflames* our *lust*, *excites*
our *unruly passions*, *fosters* our *sensual dispositions*,
stirs up our *pride*, *invigorates* our *self-love*, and
prompts us to *every iniquity* our *depraved nature*, our
sensual principle, is *prone to*. These are in themselves,
and at length prove to us, no less than *thorns and*
briers; they *wound* our *peace*, *destroy* our *every*
pleasure, render us obnoxious to men, offensive to
God, and eternally wretched in our own souls.

In fact, sirs, *ease* and *carelessness*, in what relates to
God and our own happiness, is the origin of all
that is *evil*, *hurtful*, and *miserable*; and this *easy*,
careless state of mind, is, I fear, as frequent and as
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conspicuous in our day, as it was in the time of Isaiah's prophecy. I mean not to charge any of my audience with it, but I wish to *caution* you against it. Is there a God? There is. Is there an eternal state of existence? There is. And shall we exist for ever in another world? We shall. But will a life of *evil* and *falsehood*, of *sensuality* and *lust*, of *pride* and *self-love*, of *carelessness* and *disobedience* to the Divine Being, qualify us for heaven, or constitute us happy in the eternal world? We know it will not. Reason, conscience, and scripture, convince us to the contrary. Nay, will such a life constitute us happy even here? We know it cannot. Who is the man of sorrow, inquietude, and misery, in this world? Why the man of an *evil life*. And who is the man of joy, peace, and happiness, in the present world? Why the man of religious life—the man of love, charity, and goodness. In proportion, therefore, as we open and give up the mind to the blessed influence of love and wisdom from the Lord, goodness and truth take place in the soul; we conceive an affection for what is good and true; the understanding is directed right; the will is inspired with love to God and man; we know truth from falsehood—the blessed influence we admit, *subdues* our *lusts*, *controls* our *passions*, *deadens* our *sensual dispositions*, *humbles* our *pride*, *destroys* our *self-love*, and *prompts* us to every thing that is good, virtuous, noble, and heavenly. These things are in themselves, and prove to us, as so many *divine treasures*, filling

us with *peace, pleasure, and joy*; rendering us *useful to man, acceptable to God, and eternally happy in our own minds.*

But to proceed, the desolation of the church, and the members of it, is further declared in the fourteenth verse, under a variety of figures; and it is said, that such shall be their state, until the spirit be poured down from an high: which signifies until the time when the Lord should again visit mankind with a new dispensation, establish a new church, and raise a more pure and holy people. That then the wilderness should become a fruitful field, and judgment and righteousness dwell therein. That the Lord actually accomplished this blessed prophecy at his first advent we all know. Then the Jewish church and nation was rejected in consequence of their evils, falsehoods, and apostacy—the Gentiles were called to the truth—believed on Jesus Christ—became the church and people of the Lord; and the Jews have been a dispersed, desolate, wandering people ever since, to this very day. I would only remark here, that by the spirit being poured down from on high, is signified the divine influx of love and wisdom, goodness and truth from the Lord, into the minds of men on earth. The reason why a larger measure of that divine influence was given in the primitive days, might easily be shewn, but that would lead me to a subject, the discussion of which would take up all our present time. However, observe, that by the Spirit being poured from on high, we are taught, that
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whatever is *good* and *true* is alone from the Lord our God.—He is the only source and fountain thereof: and the more we close our minds to the influence from infernal spirits, the more they are opened *to*, and receptive *of*, divine goodness and wisdom from heaven. The mind of man is so constituted as to receive this influence—his happiness depends upon the reception of it—in the same degree as he admits it into his mind, he becomes *wise* and *good*—this forms in him a *spiritual* and *heavenly life*—he rises into the angelic nature—the image and likeness of the Lord—and is internally and externally *useful*, *glorious*, and *happy*. The true *dignity* and *life* of man, therefore, depend upon this influence—this makes him a *form* of *love* and *wisdom*; and is his redemption, salvation, and final happiness. For redemption itself consists in the Lord's subduing the power of the hells, averting their influx from man, and restoring fallen human nature to a divine life of purity, love, and truth.

I allow I am digressing from the text first read; but as my thoughts are directed this way, and the subject is of great moment, you will excuse the digression, and accompany me until I return to the words.

I conceive this subject is not generally understood in its true light; if it were, there would be an end of charging us with asserting *man's merit*—*his own righteousness*—and *ability to save himself*. Nor could they any longer say we depreciate the merit

merit or mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ; because we say that man has not life in himself—that he is an organ, or form, receptive of life from the Lord—that God hath given him a will and an understanding, capable of receiving the divine influx of love and wisdom from the Lord—that from this love and wisdom alone, all that is *good* and all that is *true* arise—that without the Lord we can do nothing—that by *perverting, abusing, and turning our minds from this heavenly influence*, we make ourselves miserable—but by giving the mind up to it, and loving it, the Lord leads us in the paths of peace, religion, and goodness—raiseth us to himself, and makes us happy in his kingdom for ever. Thus all of *goodness* and *truth*, of *life, happiness, and heaven*, are from the Lord—we ascribe them to the Lord—and to him alone is the praise for ever and ever!

That what I have said upon this subject is *rational, scriptural, and true*, I appeal to the *sound judgment* of my hearers. And if you grant it to be so (as I flatter myself you will) then I beg leave to ask, Is it not our *indispensible duty*, our *biggest interest*, and our *only happiness*, to give up all our minds to the divine influence of love and wisdom from the Lord?

Is God alone the fountain of all love and goodness?—He is. Then must he not love his rational offspring? and will he not take pleasure in communicating of that love and goodness to them?

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Is he a God of wisdom and truth? and will he not most freely bestow heavenly wisdom and knowledge to all who ask of him, and desire to be truly wise? Is he the alone source of all pleasure, peace, honor, and felicity? and will he not delight in the communication of pleasure, peace, honor, and felicity to our souls? Yea, will he not, to speak after the manner of men, rejoice to see us truly and completely happy in all the powers and faculties of our souls for ever and ever?

Surely, then, we shall renounce *every evil* with *abhorrence*; detest and execrate whatever is contrary to the will and pleasure of such a God, and at the same time destructive to ourselves. Whatever is *mean, sensual, and vile*—whatever is degrading to man—beneath the dignity of an immortal—inconsistent with the noble character of the christian—and unworthy a heavenly angelic mind, we shall heartily despise. Considering ourselves heirs of a glorious immortality—natives of yonder celestial worlds—and sons and daughters of the eternal Jehovah—we shall never let the angels of heaven look down, with astonishment and concern, upon a *brother angel below*, indulging himself in the *mean*, the *impure* gratifications of *sensuality* and *vice*!—A *brother angel* did I say? Yes, sirs, all those bright angels in yonder glorious and happy worlds, were once men and women on earth, as we now are. But, giving themselves up to the Lord, they were redeemed and regenerated—they lived below a life
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of love, faith, and obedience—and they are now before the throne, spotless forms of love and wisdom, *happy, honored, angels* in their Father's kingdom—and will be so for ever. We are now probationers for that world, that honor and felicity; and if our minds are turned from evil and falsehood—if we detest and forsake whatever is vile and infernal—if we are given up to the influx of goodness and truth—are loving the Lord Jesus our God with all the heart, our neighbour as ourselves—are doing the divine will, and living a life of usefulness, love, and goodness—WE ARE NOW, EVEN NOW, in association with those angelic beings; and soon shall be (as they are) glorious, honored, and happy angels ourselves, in that celestial and eternal world.

When John saw, and conversed with one of the angels, Rev. xxii. 8, he fell at his feet to worship him; but the angel said, "See thou do it not—for I am thy FELLOW SERVANT, and OF THY BRETHREN THE PROPHETS, and of *them which keep the sayings of this book.*" Hence it is plain, *that* angel was once a man on earth, a servant and prophet of God, though now a glorious angel in heaven.

My christian friends, if you consider this circumstance seriously, it will wonderfully preserve you from evil, and animate you in the pleasing road to honor and immortality. Reason thus. 'Am I a
' man? capable of loving, serving, and enjoying
' God? Am I a *christian*, blessed with divine Re-
' velation—in which all things respecting my duty,
' my

' my happiness, and my eternal state are laid before
 ' me? Am I designed to live in the presence and
 ' kingdom of the Lord Jesus for ever? What! am
 ' I to be a *bright*, and *honored*, and happy *angel* in
 ' that kingdom? I am—this is the pleasure of God
 ' concerning me. And in order to be so, is this all
 ' that is required of me? namely, to give up and
 ' relinquish whatever would *prevent* my being an
 ' angel—to forsake whatever is injurious *to*, and
 ' beneath the dignity of a man, and that is offen-
 ' sive to that God, who, in infinite mercy and love,
 ' will raise me to this angelic state? Am I only
 ' required to *love him*, *love my neighbour*, and take
 ' the road of righteousness and peace? Is this the
 ' *mighty all*? can I do less? would I do less, if to-
 ' tally left to my own choice? Is this the way to
 ' escape all that can make us miserable—to enjoy
 ' whatever can make us completely happy—to be
 ' angels in heaven for ever.' IT IS THE WAY. And
 is there *one person* among you all, who will not take
 it? Will not every man and woman now present
 say, with exulting rapture, gratitude, and love—
 ' Blessed and adorable Lord! I ask not heaven—I
 ' desire not to be an exalted, glorious angel in thy
 ' eternal kingdom, *upon easier terms*!'

And is the spirit from on high poured down upon
 us, the divine influence of love and wisdom from the
 Lord given, in order to *prepare*, *qualify*, and *fit us*
 for this angelic state?—How thankfully, how joy-
 fully, should we receive that heavenly emanation!

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—What a pity that we should admit any other influence! that the noble mind of man, the will and affections, should be defiled, polluted, and debased by *infernal loves*, by an affection for what is *evil and vile*! how much to be lamented that hatreds, enmities, pride, unmercifulness, revenge, and envy, those infernal demons, should ever find a residence in the soul of man!—that injustice, fraud, adultery, profane conversation, and immorality, should stain the christian character, ruin an immortal spirit, and make the angels weep. Prone, by our fallen nature, to these abhorrent evils, and constantly excited to them by infernal spirits, we too easily admit the accursed influx, and plunge ourselves into sorrow, distress, and woe.

But, sirs, as we are convinced that an indulgence in these evils will separate us from the Lord, render us infernal, and make us miserable; and that by the admission of the heavenly influence of love and goodness in the will, wisdom and truth in the understanding, we shall be rendered celestial, brought nigh to God, and made eternally happy: let us admit this influence, give up our minds to the Lord, and be led by him to immortality, glory, and honor. And permit me to remind you, that an angelic life in heaven, must be preceded by an angelic life below.

What I mean, is, that if we would be angels in the kingdom of our God above, if we would enjoy the eternal felicities of that world, we must be prepared
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for it here by *regeneration*—by a life of *love, goodness, and religion*. The wilderness must become a fruitful field, in which judgment and righteousness must dwell; that is to say, the mind which has been in a wilderness state, uncultivated, full of thorns, briers, fables, and evils, must become a *fruitful field*, abounding in truth, goodness, love, charity, and purity. In short, to enjoy heaven, we must come into a heavenly state—to become angels, we must have an angelic life.

I shall conclude the present discourse, by calling your attention to the following things.

First, the *ease, honor, and usefulness* of devotedness to the Lord; or a life of religion. What is there hard or difficult in it? Doth it consist in relinquishing all that is evil and false? Have we not the power given us from the Lord to do this? Are we required to love God—do his will—and love our neighbour? What can be more rational, desirable, and pleasing? Does this require divine assistance? It is perpetually given us. Can any thing render us so honorable as such a life and conduct? Does not our real dignity consist in such a nobleness of mind—in such a disinterested, manly conduct? Is not the man of love, of charity, of virtue, a man of *esteem, veneration, and honor*? And is it not in the power of every man to love God and his neighbour, and be virtuous; consequently to be esteemed and respected? And can any life be so *useful* as a good life? A good man injures no one, but benefits all,

according to his ability—he is kind, benevolent, and merciful—his soul, his body, and his substance, are all engaged for the welfare of others—he lives not for himself, but for mankind—and the more useful he can be to them, the more happy is he in himself.

But, secondly, how *great* must be the confidence, and how *pleasing* the prospect, of such a person, when upon the verge of eternity, and death is at the door! Does he, like the guilty, the appalled, the conscious sinner, start back with horror at the approach of *death*—dread his entrance into the eternal world—and with unutterable agony of soul anticipate ten thousand woes! Is he afraid to meet a spotless angel—or view the dazzling splendors of the heavenly kingdom? Does he dread to appear before the heart-searching, and infinitely holy Jehovah? No, sirs; no. He views *death* without dismay—bids the placid messenger welcome—and serenely smiles in the dying hour. He knows the frail earthly body *only* can die—that death is but the continuation of life—the entrance of the man into the spiritual and eternal world. Nor does he fear to enter. Confident that he has enjoyed the love and goodness of his God—that he has been enabled to love him—to walk in his commandments—to love his neighbour, and live a life of use and religion—he anticipates the opening scene—and ten thousand pleasures are in prospect. He longs to meet some spotless angel form, and join in converse with his brethren there. The dazzling splendors of the heavenly world he
humbly

humbly hopes to see, and with unutterable rapture of mind, he longs to prostrate himself, with profound homage and adoration, before the God he loves!—Unworthy as he knows himself to be, he is confident of the Lord's goodness, mercy, and love—and is assured he shall be happy for ever.

Thus, sirs, you see how honorable, how easy, how useful, the truly christian life—what confidence, and what prospects the good man has, as to the dissolution of the body; and what glory, honor, peace, and felicity, are his in heaven, through the boundless ages of eternity. Animated by these blessed considerations, let us give up our minds to the divine influence of love and wisdom from the Lord—depart from all that is evil—live a life of love, charity, and use—daily rise and improve in the heavenly state—till we are meetened to dwell in the eternal world—unite with our brethren there, and be holy, happy, honored angels, in that celestial kingdom, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON X.

HYPOCRISY EXPLODED;

AND,

SINCERITY RECOMMENDED.

MATT. xxiii. 27, 28.

Wo unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men; but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

OF all the abominations which are abhorrent and offensive in the eyes of the Divine Being, that of *hypocrisy* appears to me one of the vilest and most execrable. It is an evil big with a thousand others. It is as *unprofitable* as it is *detestible*—much more difficult in the practice than its opposite virtue—when *detected* it is the most odious

odious—and the man who is guilty of it, is the object of scorn and contempt to angels, to men, and even to devils. One would almost think that human nature could never sink low enough to commit it, if we did not daily behold it before our eyes.

Hypocrisy and *deceit*, in any concerns of life, even the lowest and least important, is *detestible*; but in matters of *religion*, in what concerns God and our souls, it is *so vile*, *so odious*, that it wants a name.— And that it is a crime the most offensive in the eyes of the Lord Jesus, is evident from this consideration; that he denounced more woes against those who were guilty of it, than against any others. The scribes and pharisees were of all others, in the days of our Lord, the most given to *this vice*; and they had such an artful method of concealing their real internal state, that the common people thought them the *most holy* and *righteous* of men. In consequence of the people looking up to these characters so much, the Lord says unto them, and particularly to his disciples, “That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

It seems that these hypocrites appeared so very righteous, as to their external conduct, that many of their observers thought it was almost impossible to come up to their virtue and goodness. They paid all their tythes and dues—they fasted twice a

week—they offered up their sacrifices—attended the service of the synagogue—made long prayers—stood in the corners of the streets, and in public places, to pray—they gave much alms—they hung down their heads—carried a very sanctified appearance—seemed very abstemious and temperate—and were so scrupulous, exact, and circumspect, in every outward thing, that no one could well lay any thing to their charge. And why did they observe this apparently religious conduct? What was their motive for all this outward sanctity?—Why, truly, a most noble, generous, and laudable one!! It was, that they might have THE PRAISE OF MEN. That men might think these hypocrites, saints—that they might think these devils were angels!—This was the reward they sought, and they obtained it;—they had it—they enjoyed it. But how long?—A day, a week, or a year; and then they sunk into *contempt*, and *shame*, and *misery*.

But is it not to be lamented, that these *fair characters*, these *righteous souls*, these so very religious people, should sink into shame and misery, after they had lived so *strict*, so *virtuous*, and so *religious* a life? Let us see what their *true character* is, and then we shall better judge. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; they neither went in themselves, nor suffered others to enter; they devoured widows houses; they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and made him two-fold more the child of hell than themselves; they omitted the
law,

law, judgment, mercy, and faith; they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel; they were full of *extortion* and *excess*; they were full of *hypocrisy* and *iniquity*; a generation of *serpents* and *vipers*:—therefore our Lord says, “How can ye escape the “damnation of hell?”

This, then, was their *true and real character*—declared by infinite wisdom and truth itself—by that God who knows all hearts, and cannot be deceived. And by this we learn, how far men may go in *outward sanctity*, in the appearance of religion, and yet be the most abominable and vile in the *heart*—the *internal life*. And we also learn, by these woes denounced against such characters, how very *disagreeable* and *odious* they are in the sight of a holy and good God.

In speaking from these words a little further, I shall,

First, Consider what is the real cause and motive of this hypocrisy.

Secondly, Notice how far men may go in such a conduct, under the influence of that motive.

Thirdly, Observe how difficult the practice is—how small the reward—and how great the punishment.

Fourthly, Prove that the opposite virtue is much more easy, safe, and honorable.

Fifthly, Conclude with serious enquiry and advice.

And,

And, first, We are to consider what is the real cause and motive of this hypocrisy.

And here I may observe, that religious hypocrisy ever has for its foundation, either one or the other of the following motives, viz. *worldly advantage*, or *human applause*. For wicked as mankind may be in common, yet every one entertains an esteem and veneration for *religion*. That is, every person is persuaded that a *religious man* is HONEST, UPRIGHT, SINCERE, and FAITHFUL; and such a character is *esteemed, trusted, and depended upon*. Even wicked men like to have *commerce and connexion* with such persons, in *business, trade, and temporal concerns*. And there are men, who, notwithstanding they have *no real love for religion*, nor any desire to be virtuous; yet they have an ardent love for the world, the *profits, riches, and possessions* of it—and if they can obtain, more easily and fully, the object of their love, by the appearance of religion, they will very readily put on that appearance, to obtain the *desired and beloved object*.

So we find these pharisees. They devoured *widows houses*, and for a *pretence* made *long prayers*. These poor helpless widows probably said, ‘We have *houses and lands* which we know not well how to manage ourselves; we want some upright honest steward, or assistant, to execute our temporal concerns for us—and into whose hands shall we put our worldly concerns? Why into the hands of these very *pious, strict, and religious scribes*

scribes and pharisees. They are men of known virtue, uprightness, and honesty—every one looks upon them as saints, and under their care our property will be *safe and secure.*

Human nature is the same now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago—men are equally as capable of *deceiving* and of being *deceived.* And those who are under the influence of *worldly love* will make use of any artifice to accomplish their end. If the *appearance* of religion will facilitate their designs, and put them in the way for advantage and gain, the temptation is too strong to be resisted: the trial is made, and they soon become famous for external *sanctity, devotion, and righteousness.* Under this hypocritical mask they can more effectually carry on their purposes, to obtain which, they will, it is likely, be more *outwardly cautious and observant,* than the truly religious character.—And as it is not in the power of men to know the heart, or to judge of others but by their appearance and life; therefore such characters may too easily deceive those with whom they have connexions.

You will say, that a man must be abandoned indeed, to pretend to religion for the sake of worldly gain. It is very true—he must. But we find there have been many such, and have reason to fear there *still are.* For, let it be observed, that the love of self, and of the world, is directly opposite to the love of our neighbour, and of goodness. And when a man is under the influence of so
base

base and sordid a principle, we need not wonder at any lengths he may run, in order to obtain his end in view. This world is all he wants—and if he sees any mean by which there is a probability of obtaining it, the temptation is too powerful for him to resist.

Again, the love of *human applause* is another very *powerful motive* to *hypocrisy*. This operated very strongly with the hypocrites in the days of our Lord's first advent. As you may see, Matt. vi. 2. 6. 16. Our Lord says, "When thou doest thine alms, when thou prayest, or when ye fast, be not as the *hypocrites*, who sound a trumpet, stand in the streets to pray, and disfigure their faces, that they may be *seen of men*—have *glory and praise from men*. Verily I say unto you, they HAVE THEIR REWARD." Here it is evident, their motive was *human applause*. And it operated so powerfully in their breast, that they could pray in the streets perhaps an hour at a time, fast two or three days in the week, and *disfigure* their faces to obtain this *airy bubble*, the praise of the *staring multitude*. Men are equally fond of being thought *highly of now*. And how many are there in our day, who are under the influence of this self-love—this love of esteem and praise! Have we not seen and known too many who have *worn the mask*—who have disguised their real character—and have appeared outwardly very religious for a number of years—and at length their hypocrisy has been discovered—their deceit made manifest

manifest to the world. Have they not constantly attended places of worship, received the sacrament regularly, prayed constantly, fasted often, talked much of religion, made a fair appearance, hung down their heads as though melancholly, abstained from every *innocent* enjoyment, and been thought almost angels; and in the end have thrown off the mask, and have discovered that they were only painted sepulchres, full of all manner of evil and iniquity within? Yes, we have seen and known too many of this description—and much hurt have they done to christianity. They have caused upright minds to be evil spoken of, and suspected—and have brought a reproach upon religion itself.

I do not thus speak, because I suppose I have any such characters before me. No, by no means. I am almost a total stranger to my hearers in general, and therefore cannot be suspected of such a design. I would rather exhibit religious *hypocrisy* and *deceit* to you, and to myself, in such a light, that we may ever detest and abhor the least appearance of it in ourselves, or in others.

But, secondly, let me notice how far men may go in this abominable conduct. You may observe as to these scribes and pharisees, that almost all their time was taken up in religious exercises; they appeared to deny themselves of every *pleasing, rational, and manly enjoyment*—they paid their dues, fasted often, offered their sacrifices, observed every ceremony, went regularly to worship, prayed long and often,

often, gave much alms, were *abstemious, temperate,* and *circumspect*—and all this for the praise of men! yea, some have gone much further—have imposed upon themselves severe penances and mortifications, secluded themselves from human society, cut their own flesh, and reduced their bodies to a shadow, to gain human applause—to be esteemed as good men—as saints in the world.

But why should we wonder at all this? While men are under the influence of so mean, so sordid a principle, what is it that they will not do to gratify it? That which should most astonish us is, that men, rational men, men born in a christian land, who have every opportunity of being acquainted with revelation, with those doctrines and truths which teach us much more noble and rational principles, and set before us in the plainest manner, the way to have *true esteem, solid applause, the praise of both God and man for ever*—I say it is truly astonishing that men, under these advantages and blessings, should sink into so base a principle—and so vile a practice. Especially when we consider, in the third place, how difficult this work is in itself—how mean the reward—and how great the punishment.

And first, as to the *difficulty* attending this hypocrisy; for a man must absolutely act in direct opposition to his own inclination. A *hypocrite* is a wicked man, and as such, he can have *no love* to any thing that is like religion, and therefore he puts a force upon himself, in all that he does of a religious kind.

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If he attends religious worship, he takes no delight in the service; if he makes long prayers, the tongue only is employed; the heart is far from God: if he gives alms, he regrets the loss of that money which buys his applause. Moreover, being prone in heart to every evil and iniquity, it is the most difficult matter to practise that wickedness in *private*, and at the same time to conceal it from the world, and keep up the appearance of religion in public. A man had need be master of a considerable degree of *artifice* and *cunning* so to conduct himself. He must always be in fear that his secret sins will come to light, be manifest to the world, and spoil that reputation he is so careful to maintain: and, moreover, as religion is what the hypocrite by no means loves, every part of it must be a *burdensome* work, a mere *drudgery* and *toil*: at the same time he is totally destitute of those consolations, and animating prospects, the good man has before him. If he reflects upon his state, and looks forward into futurity, he has nothing in view but *detection*, *shame*, and *misery*. He must know that what he conceals from men, cannot be hid from the Almighty; and that all his deceit will one day be *discovered*—the disguise thrown off—and that he will appear before God, angels, and men, just such as he is—a monster of iniquity—an object of contempt—and an heir of the keenest woe.

Again, if we consider the hypocrite's *reward*. One would imagine, if we did not know to the contrary,
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it could not be a temptation powerful enough to engage him in such a life. Is it *worldly gain* which he has in view? Suppose he should accomplish his designs, and by deceit and guile procure wealth—still the outward appearance of religion, which he is obliged to keep up, will prevent the enjoyment of that wealth he has obtained—or, what is equally as probable, by such time as he has gained a little of this world by hypocrisy and guile, he may be called away from all his possessions, like the rich man mentioned in the gospel; with a, “Thou fool! this “night shall thy soul be required at thy hands.” For it is seldom known that men long enjoy those riches which they have unjustly obtained.

But suppose *human applause*, the *praise of men*, be the reward which the hypocrite is seeking; and which, I believe, is generally the object. Why this they may procure, perhaps—for our Lord says, “I “say unto you, *they have their reward.*” But, alas! how poor, how mean a reward is this! Suppose a hundred, or a thousand of his neighbours, *mistakenly* think him a *good man*, and speak of him as such—what advantage does the hypocrite reap by this? Why none at all. It may indeed feed his pride—gratify his disposition—but still how useless is it in itself.

A consciousness in a man's own breast that he does *that which is right*, will afford more satisfaction and true pleasure to the mind, than the empty applause of ten thousand men. Beside, the good opinion

nion of others, is a very uncertain thing; it seldom lasts long—the man that applauds you to-day, may condemn you to-morrow;—and if not, *life* itself is very short. But suppose a thousand people should praise the hypocrite after he is dead—will that praise affect him? No, except with shame and confusion. But if all the world were to applaud him, both in this life, and after his death—would that praise afford him any, the least, consolation? When in the spiritual and eternal world, his disguise taken off, his guile, hypocrisy, and iniquity, all brought to light, and he standing before God, angels, and glorified spirits, in all the deformity and infernal blackness of a hypocritical impostor and deceiver—would he in that world, and in such a situation, receive any satisfaction, in that a few men in the lower world, had once mistakenly thought him a good man? Poor reward this, indeed! a small compensation for the loss of divine favor, peace of conscience, and an eternal weight of glory! And yet, *sirs*, this is *all* the hypocrite's reward. The utmost of his expectation is this *puff* of *empty praise*. And O! how awful! how alarming! these following words of our Lord to such men, such hypocritical characters—“Ye serpents—ye generation of vipers—how can ye escape the damnation of hell! Therefore ye SHALL receive the *greater damnation*.” A hypocrite, therefore, is one of the worst of men. Publicans and harlots, vile as they are, yet are they less detestable than the hypocrite. To make religion

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a cloak

a cloak for villainy and deceit—to pretend to that *sacred* life, that *holy* character, in order to obtain our wicked purposes—it is horrid—no language has a name strong enough to express the crime. What, then, must be the hypocrite's punishment in the other world! when everlasting disappointment is stamped upon all his plans—when shame, confusion, and dismay, sit upon his countenance—when conscious guilt corrodes his heart—when all his secret crimes are laid open to the view of angels—when glorified spirits look upon him with contempt—and when even many of the infernals themselves, vile as they are, will *scorn* to associate with a character so *base* and *black* as that of the HYPOCRITE! What then must be his *feelings*, when thus *detected*, and thus *despised*. When the everlasting scorn of angels and men, and when exposed to endless disappointment, shame, and misery! But here we leave him. And may the God of heaven ever preserve us from the hypocrite's character and the hypocrite's doom!

Proceed we, in the fourth place, to prove that the opposite virtue is much *more easy*, as well as *safe* and *honorable*.

A few words will illustrate this subject. We have found that hypocrisy is a hard and difficult work, for reasons many. But sincerity, uprightness, and religion, are not so. I allow, that religion has been too much represented as a difficult and burdensome work; but then it has been by these designing hypocrites, or by gloomy melancholly enthu-

enthusiasts. It is not so in *itself*; but the very reverse of it. I well know, from the little experience I have of a religious life, that no other life is to be compared with it—and it shall always be my endeavor to represent true religion in its heavenly charms—as the most happy, cheerful, pleasing, and joyful life, it is possible for man to live. Now, as I have often observed, the love of God and our neighbour is the sum and substance of virtue, or religion. And what is there in this that is hard, disagreeable, or difficult? And how easy is it to be sincere, upright, and just, in all our conduct—to do that which our reason tells us is right and good. And when a man acts from *principle*, from *pure motives*, he needs no artifice or cunning to conceal any part of his conduct. He wants not the applause of men, but the approbation of his God. He desires to have a consciousness in his own mind, that he is doing his duty, both to God and man; and he little regards what judgment the world may pass upon him. It is not from the love of praise that he is good, but from the love of goodness itself. And when a man is in the love of goodness and truth, all the ways of righteousness and virtue are pleasing to his soul—they are his element—his life. Whether he be exposed to the view of the world, or is shut up in his closet, it is the same to him. He knows no hypocrisy, and therefore he is the same man in the world, in his family, or in retirement. While the hypocrite is obliged to use a thousand arts to conceal

sight

his iniquity—the sincere and upright man has need of none of them. In short, the good man finds no toil or difficulty in being what he professeth; he loves religion, and therefore he lives in the practice of it; all the reward he is seeking, is, that which flows from the divine approbation, and a good life. He is always safe under the divine protection, and will assuredly be crowned with honor, immortality, and glory, when this life is done, and he enters into the presence of that God whom he hath loved and served.

But I must conclude, with a word or two of inquiry and advice.

My good friends, be not offended if I call upon you, most seriously, to enquire whether or not you have the least taint of *guile* or *hypocrisy* in the mind. It is a *needful* inquiry. If this root of bitterness has any place, it will spoil all your virtue, and rob you of every comfort and joy. Why should we covet the praise of men? What is it to us, if we have not the praise of God, and the testimony of a good conscience? Consider that all deceit and guile are fully known to the Lord, and will be one day all laid open. Let us not, for ten thousand worlds, indulge a thought, speak a word, or do an action, but what we should be willing all the angels in heaven should see and know. Let us ever detest the *character*, the *conduct*, and the *life* of a hypocrite. It is altogether detestable and vile. But, on the other hand, *sincerity*, *uprightness*, *true religion*, are noble

noble and honorable. These are what we shall never be ashamed of, either in this life or the future—either before devils, men, angels, or even Jehovah himself. The *sincere*, the *righteous* man, is bold as a lion—nothing can dismay him—he will stand before God and angels with confidence, joy, and honor, when the hypocrite calls for the mountains and rocks to fall upon him and cover his guilty tortured soul from shame, contempt, and woe.

The *real christian* may be despised in this life, but it will only be by those whose praise would be a *reproach*. He cannot be despised by the good—these must honor him, esteem, and love him. You know, you well know, that the way to true *honor*, to real *applause*, is to be what we profess to be, as christians—that is, to love the Lord our God, live in charity with man, and walk in the ways of truth and righteousness—these ways are ways of pleasantness, these paths are paths of peace, and they lead us to the summit of glory, honor, and renown—even to the kingdom of God our Father and Saviour, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, honor, and happiness. And may the Lord Jesus Christ preserve us from all hypocrisy and deceit—that we may be upright, faithful, and sincere, in all our ways—and that, when we stand at his bar of judgment, we may be Israelites indeed, in whom there is *no guile*! Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE TRUE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN.

MATT. xvii. 1, 2, 3.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold there appeared unto them, Moses and Elias, talking with him.

AS the *grand* and *principal* object I have in view, in all my public labors, is to bring my hearers to a true knowledge of the sacred scriptures, and thus to *truth* and *goodness*; so it will be my *constant endeavor* to open the spiritual sense of that word, according to that degree of light I may have concerning it—as I am fully convinced the more the under-

understanding is enlightened by divine truth, the more the will must be affected with goodness.— And although the opening the spiritual sense of the word will involve in it both *doctrinal* and *practical subjects*, and lead to the discussion of them, yet I shall see it my duty (occasionally) to insist upon those subjects in a more *particular manner*, for reasons which, I presume, must be obvious to every judicious mind; as it is necessary to accommodate the *method* of instruction, as well as the *matter* of it, to the different states of men—some receiving it best in *one mode*, and some in *another*. For the great end we should all have in view in preaching, reading, conversation, &c. should be to receive spiritual instruction, and to communicate it. And as I have often observed to you, that there is not a single sentence in all the word of the Lord, but what has an internal spiritual meaning; and as spiritual knowledge is true knowledge, calculated to make us both *wise* and *happy*;—it is, therefore, highly incumbent upon us to make ourselves acquainted therewith, to the utmost of our capacity. It is a pleasing employment—a most delightful work—and will well compensate us for all our diligence and care.

The text before us, when truly and spiritually understood, is replete with heavenly instruction. It includes subjects of the utmost importance; but, viewed barely in the letter, it seems to exhibit nothing more than a very short account of a circum-

stance which took place when our Lord was in the flesh. And yet, even in this view of it, there is one thing which, I believe, christians in general have not attended to; and that is, that Moses and Elias not only appeared before Jesus and his three disciples—but also actually *talked* with Jesus. What I mean is, that christians might have known that Moses and Elias, and consequently all other persons, are proper living men after death, as well as before; that they are not mere ærial existences, but *men*, capable of talking, seeing, hearing, and the like, out of the body of flesh, as much as in it. These men *talked* with Jesus, and the disciples *saw* them: therefore they were proper men, in perfect human form, as every one of us shall be, immediately after death, *without* this body of dust, which we then lay down, never more to re-assume or want; having *spiritual substantial bodies*, suited to that spiritual state; and therefore (as wisely observed) death is only a continuation of life—we being equally men as before, and in a much more perfect state without the body of dust than with it; as that is only useful in our present *imperfect* state of existence.

Thus much, I say, might have been gathered from the words of our text, even in the letter of it. But we will now proceed to the words, and endeavor to open them for our spiritual edification.

And, first, I may observe *one circumstance*, which heretofore I have frequently thought of, but knew not how to account for it; and I should suppose
most

most of you have noticed the same—and that is, in the sacred pages, Peter, James, and John, are *mentioned together*, and were distinguished by the Lord in a peculiar manner, being frequently with him on particular occasions, when the rest of the apostles were not admitted. I have often wondered at this seeming partiality, as many more probably have done; but how to account for it I knew not. And, indeed, we are left to the same difficulty in a number of cases recorded in the word, while we only view them in the letter. But when their spiritual meaning is opened, the difficulty vanisheth away, and we discover marks of infinite wisdom in every circumstance.

The passages I allude to are the following; first, this in our text; second, Mark v. 37, where the Lord went to the house of a ruler in the synagogue to heal his daughter; it is said, “He suffered no man to follow him save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James;” third, Matt. xxvi: 37, “Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder;—and “he took with him Peter, and the two sons of “Zebedee” (that is, James and John) “and began “to be sorrowful, and very heavy.”

Here we see how peculiarly these three apostles were distinguished by the Lord Jesus Christ; and there are several other passages to which I may refer you presently, wherein one or other of these
disciples

disciples are as particularly noticed. Indeed, the Lord's choice of *twelve* apostles, neither more nor less, has a spiritual signification, and each one of the twelve represents something spiritual. The reason, therefore, why Peter, James, and John, are thus mentioned together, and so peculiarly distinguished by the Lord, is, that they spiritually signify, and represent, the *three* grand essentials of all true religion, which must be found in every man, in order to his being with the Lord, and enjoying his peculiar favor and love for ever (as I hope to make appear in the sequel of this discourse) that is to say, Peter represents *faith*—John, *love*—and James, *obedience*, or *good works*. Not but each of these disciples were men of faith, love, and obedience; but the leading trait in Peter's character was faith, in John's love, and in James's good works.

In proof of the first, see Matt. xxvi. 33. 35, Peter says, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended; though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And chap. xvi. ver. 18, "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," &c. All which is expressive of a divine faith in the Lord. And that John was more eminent for *love*, is evident, first, from his being the disciple whom Jesus peculiarly loved, and who leaned upon the breast of his Lord; and,

and, secondly, from the three epistles he wrote, which breathe nothing but *love* and *charity*. And that James was peculiarly eminent for *obedience*, or *good works*, we need only read his excellent epistle to be convinced of.

Hence, then, we need not wonder that these three men are so unitedly noticed in the word, and were so peculiarly distinguished by the Lord.—When our Lord wrought a miracle upon the ruler's daughter, he suffered no man to be with him save Peter, James, and John. When in the garden of Gethsemane, loaded with temptation and sorrow, none were with him save Peter, James, and John. When transfigured on a high mountain, none beheld his glory save Peter, James, and John.

And do not we from these circumstances learn two or three of the most important of all lessons?

First, That in order to be peculiarly distinguished of the Lord, faith, love, and obedience, must be united in the mind—

Secondly, That their union is essential to working the greatest miracles, or deliverances—

Thirdly, That their union is essential to bearing a process of temptations—

And, fourthly, that without these are united in man, he cannot behold the Lord in his glory.

These are the lessons we are taught by the above circumstances, and which we will endeavor a little to

to illustrate, and then we will notice some further particulars in our text.

And first, We are taught that in order to be peculiarly distinguished by the Lord, *faith, love, and obedience*, must be united in the mind. My friends, be not displeased with me, that I insist so much upon this subject—there is in our day an absolute necessity for it; because the doctrines now taught are too much inimical to this heavenly union. *Peter alone*, or if you will, *faith alone*, is the favorite subject in most pulpits, and in most societies; every thing belonging to religion is resolved into *faith*. If you ask, how a man is forgiven? The answer is, by *faith alone*. If how justified? by *faith alone*. If you ask, what is the life of the soul? The answer is, *faith only*. If, how a man overcomes all his spiritual enemies, and his inbred evils? The reply is, by *faith alone*. And if you ask, are not good works essentially necessary to forgiveness, justification, and the like? The answer is, no; *by no means whatever*—they have nothing to do therewith. But if you further ask, are not men to do good works? they will say, not in order to forgiveness, justification, or acceptance with God; but AFTER this justification and acceptance, good works may follow. And even in *this state*, they will add, man cannot live without sinning against the Lord, though his sins be not noticed, or do not condemn him.

But, first, the word of the Lord teacheth us quite different doctrines; yea, rather, that faith is nothing without

without love, nor love without faith; and that both are of no avail, except determined to good works, or obedience to the divine will. Indeed, faith more properly belongs to the *understanding*, and love to the *will*; and good works arise from the union of both. Now, if a man has ever so much faith in his understanding, what is the value of it, if he has no love to God and goodness in his will? And to pretend to both faith and love, without obeying the Lord, what is it but a pretence only. Faith without works, is *dead*—and love to God, without obeying God, is *impossible*. Therefore, faith, love, and obedience, must be united in the mind, or we are not the disciples of Jesus Christ—we are not his servants or children. Let us use our reason upon this subject. Is it reasonable to suppose we are the real subjects of the Lord's kingdom, because we profess a strong *faith* in him, if at the same time we do not *love* him? Or, by professing both a strong faith, and an ardent love to him, and at the same time not obeying him, or doing his will? We are convinced this cannot be. We must, *believe*, *love*, and *obey*, or we are not the servants of God. Suppose a son tells his parent that he believes his commands very good, his precepts exceeding right, and professeth to love him and his commands, and yet continueth in the breach of them—where is that son's faith or love? It is impossible that he can have either. And I will venture to say, it is equally as impossible for a man to have any *genuine spiritual faith*

faith in the Lord, SEPARATE from *pure love* and *obedience*.

But, secondly, the union of faith, love, and obedience, is essential to our spiritual *restoration* and *deliverance*. When Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus, he took with him Peter, James, and John. All the miracles our blessed Lord performed in the days of his flesh, had a spiritual signification; and represented those internal spiritual maladies, under which we labor; with our deliverance from them, through divine power and mercy. And our Lord himself says, "In my name, they that believe shall
 " cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up
 " serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall
 " not hurt them—they shall lay hands on the sick,
 " and they shall recover." Mark xvi. 17, 18. By all which is meant, a divine power given to cast out, overcome, and subdue, our internal evils and spiritual enemies; but this power can only be WITH, and exercised BY, those who *believe, love, and obey*: for without love to God, our spiritual enemies will not be detested—and without love to his laws, we shall not forsake the ways of iniquity. Hence it is plain, that what is represented by these three disciples, that is, faith, love, and obedience, must attend us in all our exertions and efforts, towards overcoming all that is evil, and every spiritual enemy that opposeth our welfare and happiness.

The third thing taught us, is, that the union of faith, love, and obedience, is essential to our bearing
 a *process*

a *process of temptations*. By temptations I mean, a struggle and conflict in the mind, between falsehood and truth, evil and good; that our Lord was grievously tempted is plain from the word—for he was forty days in the wilderness, tempted of the devil; and in the garden of Gethsemane he sustained a most heavy temptation, inasmuch that he sweat as it were drops of blood. The Lord, by means of temptations, subdued hell—reduced to order all things therein—and glorified his humanity. And whoever comes into states of truth and goodness, will experience temptations from spirits of falsehood and evil, who will use all sorts of malice and cunning to effect their purpose—attempting to destroy the principles of his faith and love, and whatever hath relation to his spiritual life. And these temptations are as so many struggles between the internal, or spiritual man, and the external, or natural man. And unless man, in this state, were under the influence of faith and love, and a desire to do the will of the Lord, he could not sustain these conflicts, but would fall under them. And by our Lord taking with him *Peter, James, and John*, when in this state of conflict, we are taught how essentially necessary it is for us to unite faith, love, and obedience, in order that in the hour of temptation, we may overcome. Not that the victory is *our's*, for it is the Lord that fights for us in these seasons; which would not be the case if we did not believe on him, love him, and desire to keep his commandments.

(But

(But the subject of temptations, I may probably take up and dwell more largely upon at a future opportunity). Proceed we,

Fourthly, to observe, that without the union of love, faith, and obedience, we cannot behold the Lord in his glory. This is so plainly and repeatedly set before us, in the sacred pages, that it is truly astonishing how any professor of christianity can attempt, in the least degree, to separate them. Our Lord says, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven." "Many will say in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you—depart from me ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock," &c. Matt. vii. And again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And all the apostles set before us the absolute necessity of faith that works by *love*, and of true *obedience* to the divine will; and the New Testament almost concludes with these words from the Lord himself, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter
" through

"through the gates into the city." In short, it is so far from being possible that we should see the glory of the Lord, or be happy in his kingdom, without the union of these three virtues, that it is absolutely impossible to have the one without the other. A true faith will ever be accompanied with true love; and both with a conscientious regard to the divine will. Men may pretend to *faith*—they may boast of love to God—but it is only a *mere pretension*, if the life be not good. A good life can only flow from faith and love, and where faith and love are, there a *good life* will be found—nor can we be justified in the sight of a holy God, any farther than as we *believe with the heart unto righteousness*.

Upon this article I may very safely appeal to the enlightened understanding of my hearers. Can any one of you imagine that you have a true spiritual faith in the Lord Jesus, if you are not thereby led to love him, as a God of mercy, truth, and goodness? And can you suppose that you both believe on him and love him too, if at the same time you do not obey him? Or can any one of you believe that you are justified in his sight, and shall dwell in his kingdom, if you are conscious you live in the violation of his commandments; leading an evil life? You know what answer to make—reason, conscience, and scripture direct you. You will not wonder, then, that our Divine Lord so peculiarly distinguished those three disciples who thus repre-

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sent faith, love, and good works in union—you will not be surprized that he took them up to the mountain when he thus appeared in glory—and you will be assured, that possessing true faith in your understanding, pure love in your will, and being obedient in life, you are the peculiar favorites of the Lord; and shall assuredly behold his glory, and live in his kingdom for ever. Let us, then, enter upon self-examination, that we may know whether or not we are such disciples as these. It is an important enquiry—and we cannot be too earnest in it. I will now proceed to notice some farther particulars in our text. It is said “After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.” It is difficult to account from the letter, the reason why it is said, after six days—because there is no particular circumstance mentioned as taking place six days before this event. And I am persuaded no person can, from the letter of the text, give a satisfactory reason for this circumstance. But when the spiritual sense is known, then a beautiful propriety appears in the words, and the reason why it is said *after six days*, is very discoverable.

Days, in many parts of the word, do not so much relate to *time* as to *states*. So the number of days, or years, have a spiritual meaning. It is said, “That the children of Israel were forty years in the wilderness—the prophet fasted forty days—Jesus was forty days in the wilderness and fasted there.”

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Hosea says, "After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight," vi. 2. And of the church, or woman, in Rev. xii. 6, it is said, "She fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore *days*." Now days, in these places, do not mean days as to time, but have a *spiritual meaning*, and wholly refer to spiritual things. So in Genesis it is said, that God finished his work in six days and rested on the seventh. Six days, therefore, signify the several states which man passeth through in his regeneration, before he is fully regenerated, and becomes a celestial man; and the seventh day, or sabbath, signifies his rest, or entrance into heaven. And in this view there appears a beautiful propriety in the words, "After six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, up into an high mountain apart." Because it not only points literally to the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, but spiritually to the glorification of every person, who in this life hath united faith, love, and obedience, in the mind and in the life—for no man can thus enter into rest and heaven until his six days labor be over, and he be fully regenerated. Then, but not before, will Jesus take him up into the mountain, and shew him his glory.

But I plainly see that I have not time to elucidate the spiritual meaning of this blessed text, in the present opportunity. And therefore I must leave

the other part to another season, only observing that by the Lord's face shining as the sun, is signified and represented the divine good of his divine love—his raiment white as light, signified the divine truth of his divine wisdom—by Moses and Elias, were represented the historical and prophetic word—and by the bright cloud, was signified the word in its literal sense. An illustration of these subjects must now be omitted.

There are three things to which your attention is particularly called by what has already been said. First, The necessity of uniting the three grand essentials of religion. See that your faith be genuine, your love pure, and your life good. Remember a *good* tree cannot bring forth *bad* fruit; therefore, by their fruits ye shall know them. Let us be more careful to lead a good life, than to boast about faith—and with the apostle Paul acknowledge, that “love is the highest grace;” because where there is true spiritual love, there is faith also, and there will be charity, good works, obedience to the divine will: and where these are, there is conjunction with the Lord—such men are in his peculiar favor.

Secondly, If these are united, you will then be enabled to overcome all your spiritual enemies, subdue your evils, and in all temptations and conflicts come off with victory; for the man who loves and serves the Lord, will ever be supported, defended, and delivered by the Lord. You will
pass

pass through your six days labor, and through all your various states until fully regenerated, made pure, and you become an image of the Lord; being a form of love and wisdom, truth and goodness. And after six days the Lord will take you up into an high mountain apart, and shew you his glory—that is, he will take you to mount Zion, the city of the living God, the habitation of his holiness, and the inheritance of all that believe in, love, and serve him. There will you behold his glory, rest from your labors, and be completely happy.

THE LORD ALONE OUR FATHER AND MASTER.

With the angelic hosts you'll dwell above,

In all the *exquisite delights of love.*

The God you serve, your *everlasting friend*;

Your *bliss* supreme—your *glory* never end.

MATT. XXIII. 2. 10.

And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master; even Christ.

OUR divine Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, frequently reminds his disciples of a disposition and temper which they had (and which most men have) to indulge in the love of dominion, or a will to be the Lord. He tells them, this was the predominant principle in the scribes and pharisees; they loved the

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PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN.
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pass through your six days labor, and through all
your various trials until fully regenerated, made
pure, and you become an inheritor of the Lord's
being a fellow of love and wisdom, and good-
ness. And after six days the Lord will take you
up into an high mountain apart, and there you his
glory—that is, he will take you to mount Zion, the
city of the living God, the habitation of his holiness,
THE LOVE OF DOMINION AND AUTHORITY
CONDEMNED; *leave him. The*
from your labor, and be completely happy.
OR,
THE LORD ALONE OUR FATHER AND MASTER.
*With the angels thou shalt dwell above,
In all the worlds of glory thou shalt dwell above.
The God you love—your Father—your Lord—your
our Father—your Father—your Lord—your*

MATT. xxiii. 9, 10.

And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father
which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your
master, even Christ,

OUR divine Lord and Master, Jesus Christ,
frequently reminds his disciples of a disposition and
temper which they had (and which most men have)
a peculiarly strong propensity to indulge; that is to
say, *pride, love of dominion*, or a wish to be the
greatest. He tells them, this was the *predominant*
principle in the scribes and pharisees; they loved the
the

the uppermost rooms, the chief seats in the synagogues, greetings in the market place, and to be called of men *Rabbi, Rabbi, or master*—and whatever they did was to gain applause—to be seen of men—to be honored in this life. But however the world might judge of them, our Lord knew their hearts, saw their state, was perfectly acquainted with the infernal principle from which they acted; and he calls them *serpents*—a generation of *vipers*. By *serpents*, he means men of a *sensual, base, vile principle*; and by *vipers*, men of *pernicious, poisonous qualities*; full of all manner of evil and uncleanness. And he says unto them, “How can ye escape the “damnation of hell? And as for a *pretence*, to “cover your hypocrisy and deceit, ye make *long* “prayers—ye shall therefore receive the greater “damnation.” By which we learn, that nothing can be more hateful to the Lord, or more dangerous to the soul, than *hypocrisy and deceit*, especially in matters of a religious nature. To *profess* religion, and pretend to an eminent degree of it, for the sake of worldly honor, profit, or praise, is a conduct so execrable in itself, that language cannot find a word strong enough to express its true deformity and odiousness;—and I have long thought, that of all the infernals in the regions of darkness and woe, the *artful, designing, and vile hypocrite*, is one of the most *hateful, despised, and miserable*.

Permit me, my fellow christians, to earnestly caution you all against the *smallest degree*, the *least taint*, of this most abominable evil. What is it to us, if we HAVE *human applause*, through our deceit and guile? What! if all the world thought us angels? Is their applause any more than a puff of wind? Will it avail us in death, or follow us into eternity, and make us happy there? When all *external appearances* will be thrown off, every veil and mask taken away, and we appear before God, angels, men, and devils, JUST WHAT WE REALLY ARE—when all guile and artifice is discovered, and the painted sepulchre laid open—then where is our *honor*, our *applause*, our *praise*? Gone! for ever gone! And in their place are found *shame*, *contempt*, *conscious guilt*, and *everlasting woe*! O! let us guard against religious hypocrisy and guile. Our hearts, our affections, our designs and purposes, are all open to the Lord every moment: he knows what we are, and there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest, neither any thing kept secret but what shall come abroad and be known.

But we observed, that the *love of dominion*, a desire to be *great*, even the disciples of our Lord had a very strong propensity to; insomuch that they disputed among themselves, *which* should be *greatest*:—and the two sons of Zebedee sent their mother to request of Jesus, that he would set one of them on his right hand, and the other on his left,

left, in his kingdom. This evil propensity, I am persuaded, we have all experienced too much of. Every man has a desire to be *great, honored, to rule* over others; that his will may be his law. And this lust of dominion, this love of dignity, honor, and rule, is not confined merely to men of the *world, and worldly things*; but it appears in the *church*, amongst men of *religious character*. The *chief seats* in the *synagogue* are thirsted after, the highest places in the church are desired; and where this love of dominion and greatness reigns, no bounds can circumscribe it—the layman would be a priest, the priest a doctor, the doctor a bishop, the bishop a pope, and the pope a God. Such is the *nature of ambition, and love of rule*; against which we have as much reason to guard, as against hypocrisy and guile.

But, we will proceed to notice the words of our text—in doing which, we will consider them in the order they stand; and then make a few reflexions upon the whole.

And first, our Lord says, “Call no man your father upon the earth.” By which we are not to understand, that we are not to acknowledge, honor, and love our *natural parents*; this is a duty incumbent upon all, a duty which no law can set aside, and which the laws of christianity commend and enforce—“Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” And it would be well

well if all children did so honor, love, and acknowledge their earthly parents—if *afflicted*, that they would succor and aid them—if *poor*, that they would help and relieve them—if *aged* and *infirm*, that they would comfort and cherish them—and in all cases manifest the duty and love of children.

But by calling no man father upon the earth, something very different from the above is signified. Our Lord's words had always a spiritual and celestial meaning in them, as well as a natural or literal one; and in this passage (as well as others in the word) by EARTH is meant, the *church of the Lord* on the earth, and not the ground itself, or the whole of its inhabitants; and, therefore, by calling no man your father upon the earth is meant, that no one in the church is to be regarded as the head of it, to whom we owe implicit obedience in matters of conscience and religion, this being the *sole prerogative* of our God and father, who is in the heavens. However eminent and useful men may be in the church of the Lord, still they are *but men*—but mere instruments in the Lord's hands for good. *As instruments* in his hands we may respect and value them; but they are not our *spiritual parents*, any more than the *pipe* which conveys water to our houses, is the *spring* or *fountain* by which we are supplied.

All who are true and living members of the Lord's church, are *begotten, born-again* by the Lord alone, through his word; and therefore *he only* is *our father*. Indeed the apostle Paul says, in his
first

first epistle to the Corinthians, ch. iv. ver. 15, that "HE had begotten them through the gospel;" but he must only mean, that *through divine truth* they were begotten, or born again, and that he was the instrument of conveying that truth:—if he had meant any thing further, he must have been exceedingly wrong. While, therefore, we pay a due regard *for*, respect and love *to*, those persons in the church, who are employed to dispense the word, to teach and preach, and to be eminently instruments in the Lord's hands for good; let us, at the same time remember, that one is our father, even the Lord—that to him alone we are indebted for every thing that is true and good—that our regeneration, our spiritual life, salvation, and happiness, are from him only—that we are his children, bound to honor, love, and serve him all the days of our life, and for ever.

But, secondly, our Lord adds, "Neither be ye called *masters*; for one is your master, even "*Christ*." By which we are to understand that no one, however exalted, learned, or whatever his abilities, is to lord it over the *consciences* of others, to usurp authority, to rule and govern, to command and order, as a master does his servant: nor must they affect human or religious honor, dominion over the faith of men, nor to be stiled *masters*, as if upon their own authority they set up for guides and leaders; but they must own *one* master only, that is CHRIST, whose *word alone* must be their rule, whilst

whilst *they*, as brethren, arrogate no supremacy over each other; being all alike submissive to their common head, master, and Lord, Jesus Christ.

I am not suggesting here that there are to be no distinctions of character and office in the church of the Lord; no, by no means. God himself hath ordained them—they are necessary and important. But then, whatever are the *distinctions*, the *characters* and *offices*, every one who fills them is to refer the honor and dignity thereof to the *Lord*, and not to himself. The higher his office, the more serviceable ought he to be; the greater his dignity, the more useful his life; and as all service and usefulness are from and of the Lord alone, therefore to him alone is the praise and the honor to be ascribed. But when men in office and dignity in the church, assume to themselves *superiority* and *honor*, on account of the *office they fill*, or the *service they perform*, then it is that they are in the *love of dominion*, rob God of the honor due to him, and are fond of being called masters, rulers, and Lords over God's heritage.

Such persons consider not that *one* is our master, even Christ; and that all the real members of his church, whatever their station, office, or employment, are *only brethren of one family*, *servants of one master*, and *subjects of one Lord*. By the Lord Jesus being our master, we are taught, that to him alone are we accountable in all matters of religion and conscience—that he has an indubitable right to govern,

vern, direct, and guide—that the work we have to do is of his appointment—all our powers and faculties belong to him—and his commands must be obeyed. But, at the same time, we consider him as our Master and Lord, and ourselves his servants and subjects; we are to recollect that our ruler is not a *tyrant*, nor our service *slavery*. Our Lord hath fully instructed us as to this, by calling himself our *father* and our *friend*; by denominating us his children; and by saying, “Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends.” And, moreover, from this consideration, that all his commands and injunctions are given in *love*; they are calculated for our own honor, profit, and happiness, and not to advantage himself; the more diligently we attend to them, the more abundantly are we blessed; his service is perfect freedom, in keeping his commandments there is great reward, and to be subject to the Lord is to be completely and everlastingly happy.

Permit me then, my christian hearers, to recommend a willing, a cheerful, and unreserved obedience to such a friend and master. If we serve not him, we are under more cruel tyrants than the fable slaves of Africa; and our service is a more hard and dreadful slavery than theirs. If we are subject to our own lusts and passions, our evil dispositions and propensities, we are actually in the most awful bondage; the harder we toil, and the longer we labor, the greater will be our disappointment.

pointment, the more poignant our pain, and the keener our woe. If we are the servants of the world, and striving to gain it all from the love of it, we are at enmity with God, and ensuring the loss of eternal felicity, riches, and honor. If we are subject to infernals, and influenced by their deceitful suggestions and temptations, to every evil and criminal indulgence, they are all the while concerting our ruin; and will never leave us until we sink into that misery and sorrow, in which they themselves are—for the wages of sin is death; and we cannot serve God and mammon. But if we willingly and faithfully serve our divine master, our best friend, our heavenly father, we shall find all his service perfect freedom, his work pleasant, his commands easy, and his reward *infinite* and *eternal*. We were created to serve no other master—redeemed to obey no other Lord—and we are spared in life, that we may return to him, become his subjects, and be happy in his kingdom.

The faculties and powers of our minds are too noble for the service of sin, the mean degrading slavery of infernals, or for subjection to sensual lusts, and depraved dispositions—an immortal spirit should despise the filthy drudgery of sin and vice—an heir of a celestial kingdom should rise above sensuality, earthly-mindedness, and infernal influence—a heaven-born soul should yield obedience, and be in subjection to no ruler and lord, but the eternal Governor and King of heaven himself!

But,

But, to be a little more particular upon the words. It is said, "*One is your father, which is in heaven; and one is your master, even Christ.*" By the letter, some might imagine that the father and the master are *two distinct beings, or persons*; especially as men are so much confirmed in the idea of more Gods than one, or of more divine persons than one in the deity;—but this is not the case. By father, is here meant the divine love of Jehovah, dwelling in the *interior of the mind*; for divine love is the *real and essential life* of a regenerate man. And by *Christ*, is signified *divine truth*; for it implies the same as *Messiah, Anointed, and King*—and all those names denote divine truth. Therefore the internal meaning of the words is as follows:—call no man your father on earth, viz. let no *earthly, sensual, evil, and infernal love*, be the life of your mind; be not the children of this world, or of Satan; let not your ruling, your life's love, be any thing less than *heavenly*; the *love of self, of domination, of the world, and of evil*, are all infernal and vile loves; if you are in any of these they are *your life*—all your affections, desires, and dispositions, proceed from such love, as from a parent; and, consequently, whatever belongs to such an one, and proceeds from him, is of the same nature and quality with that predominant love, which is his life.

But our divine Lord says, "Let it not be thus with *you, my disciples*. Let one be your father which is in heaven, viz. let my love abide in you,
" as

“as a *living principle*, from which will proceed all
“that is good, and heavenly, and pure. Continue
“ye in my love—abide in my love; as the branch
“cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the
“vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

Hence it is plain, that this divine love, dwelling
as a living principle in the mind, is as a parent pro-
ducing and begetting whatever is good, holy, lovely,
and heavenly. And then by Christ, as our master,
is signified, *divine truth*, united with *divine good* (or
love) in the internal; and therefore, our Lord
says, “Be not ye called masters;” viz. let not the
doctrines, traditions, and opinions of men—the
laws, rules, and orders of men, be your *guide, direc-*
tion, and *rule*, in what respects religion and your
souls. Be not governed and influenced by these;
but remember, one is your master, even Christ;
that is, *divine truth alone* must be your master and
lord. It is to this you are to be obedient—by
this you are to be ruled and governed—for divine
truth furnisheth us with every pure and sound
doctrine, every just and good rule, every heavenly
command, and every encouraging motive to pure
undefiled religion. And when pure heavenly love
is the life of the will, and pure divine truth the life
of the understanding; or, in other words, when
goodness and truth (or love and wisdom) are united
in the internal of the mind, then one is our father,
which is in heaven; and one is our master, even
Christ. The love of self, and of dominion, will
be

be trodden under foot—the love of the world, and of evil, cast out—love to God, and charity to man, be the life of the soul—and divine truth, lead, guide, and direct us in all that is good, true, and heavenly.

But as our time will not allow me to enter upon the other two verses, we will leave them for another opportunity, and conclude with a few reflexions.

First, then, we are taught by these words to guard against all *self-exaltation*, *pre-eminence*, and *superiority* over others. Whatever our station, character, office, or abilities, we are only BRETHREN—we are not lords and masters. Therefore whatever honor belongs to the office, or character, *that* must be referred to the Lord alone, to whom it is due;—our place is to be *humble*, *lowly-minded*. He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Secondly, we are to consider that no man, or body of men, however learned, good, eminent, and wise, are to be our guides and rulers in matters of faith and practice. We are not to look up to them, but to the Lord alone, and his word; *they* may err, and without design lead us wrong; but the Lord cannot err, nor his word deceive us. And, therefore,

Thirdly, The Lord Jesus Christ *alone* must be our father and our master; his love the life of our minds, and his truth the *rule* of that life. Then whatever is begotten by, and proceeds from that divine love and truth, will be holy, pure, good, and heavenly.

And, fourthly, We learn from hence, that whatever is good and true *in us*, and whatever is good

and true as done *by us*, all this is of and from the *Lord alone*; and therefore nothing is to be ascribed unto man. He has no merit, nothing to boast of, or glory in, save the Lord his God.

And, lastly, Let us remember, that as we admit the love and truth of the Lord into our will and understanding, and our life is regulated thereby, we become the *servants* and *children* of the Lord, our heavenly father and master; consequently, we shall receive the *reward* of faithful servants and obedient children—which will be no less than eternal conjunction with our God—the enjoyment of his kingdom—the glories, felicities, and honors thereof—the full fruition of his love and goodness—and all this through the boundless ages of a never-ending eternity.

In the pleasing prospect of this superlative and unspeakable glory, may we be the faithful servants of our divine Lord—the obedient children of our heavenly Father—until meetened for heaven, we are called to his arms, to sit down in his kingdom, and be for ever happy! Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

THE TEMPLE CLEANSED;

OR,

THE HEART NO LONGER A HOUSE OF MERCHANDISE.

John ii. 16.

Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

WE are informed in this chapter, that the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem about the time that the Jews passover was at hand; a feast which they kept yearly in remembrance of the destroying angel's passing by their doors, when all the first-born in Egypt were slain. About this time Jesus went into the temple at Jerusalem, and when he came there, "he found in the temple

“those that fold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and
 “the changers of money, sitting: and when he
 “had made a scourge of small cords, he drove
 “them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and
 “the oxen, and poured out the changers money,
 “and overthrew the tables.” And in Matthew
 and Mark it is added, “he said unto them, It is
 “written, my house shall be called the house of
 “prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”
 And, in the words of our text—“Take these
 “things hence; make not my Father’s house an
 “house of merchandise.”

It is obvious, that the temple at Jerusalem was
 built by the particular direction and command of
 the Lord, as a house of prayer and religious wor-
 ship; that it was, therefore, *holy* and *sacred*, and
 by no means ought to be *profaned* or *defiled*. But
 it was not only devoted to religious services, and
 sacred to the Lord—it was also, in every particular
 of it, *representative*. Its *form*, *materials*, *utensils*,
ceremonies, *sacrifices*, *offerings*, and *worship*, were
 all representative of the Lord, his spiritual church,
 and the man of the church; and therefore it was
most holy.

But the Jews, and even those who officiated in
 the service of the temple, were become so *sensual*
 and *evil*, that they not only profaned their offices,
 and polluted the worship, but also defiled and pro-
 faned the *temple itself*, that *holy place*, devoted to
 God and his service only. They made it a *place*
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of traffic, a mere market, in which they bought and sold oxen, sheep, doves, and the like. Our Lord entering in, and beholding this sacrilege and profanation, not only manifested his disapprobation, his indignation at their iniquitous conduct, but also his *divine power and authority*; for he made a scourge of small cords, drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables.—I have frequently considered this transaction, and have thought it as *wonderful and singular* as almost any recorded in the four evangelists.

Here is the Lord Jesus, who appeared as a man, and was looked upon as no more than a man, entering the temple, without any visible authority—not sustaining any civil office in Judea; he takes a scourge of cords, drives out all the buyers and sellers, scatters their money upon the floor, disperseth their oxen and sheep, and no one appears to make any *resistance*!—all are *astonished—enraged*—but not a hand moved against him!—When it was all over, they ask him, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou doest all these things?” This is all that we hear concerning it.—But why did they not *resist* the Lord? Why did they suffer themselves to be forced out with a scourge—their oxen and sheep to be driven away—and their money scattered upon the ground? Why, first, *conscious guilt* will *sink* the *proudest mind*, and make a coward of the *stoutest heart*. They knew

that what they did was *sacrilegious* and *profane*, By infernal demons prompted to this vile conduct, they fled with shame and wild confusion when Christ the God appeared.

There is much spiritual instruction to be gathered from these circumstances, some of which we shall notice presently.

We will proceed to our text—"Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." In speaking from which we will,

First, Explain what is meant by the Father's house.

Secondly, What by its being made a house of merchandise.

Thirdly, Consider what things are to be taken thence, and the reasons why.

And first, What is meant by the Father's house?

The temple at Jerusalem, as I before observed, was in every particular *representative*; it was also a *sacred* and *holy building*, as being built by the command and direction of the Almighty. And as divine representative worship was to be performed in it, consequently it ought not in any manner to be profaned. But when the real things which the temple represented are known, then we shall see why it is called the house of God, and why it ought not to be polluted.

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As there is a three-fold sense in the holy word, that is, a celestial, spiritual, and natural; so, likewise, this temple had a three-fold representation:—first, It was a type and figure of heavenly things, as might easily be shewn if we had time here;—but, secondly, It was a figure and representation of the Lord's spiritual church and kingdom, in this world;—and, thirdly, It was a figure and representation of every *man* of the church. The two last are what I shall confine myself to now, and more especially the *last* of all.

First, As the temple represented the spiritual church of the Lord, therefore it was called the Lord's house; for God doth not dwell in houses made with hands, in any other sense than figuratively. But the true spiritual church is the Lord's house *really*—in that he dwells—and as the temple represented *that*, it was to be *kept holy*—by no means profaned or polluted. And it may be observed here, that the temple, and all that belonged to it, was a figure of the church which was to commence at the coming of the Lord; that is, the *christian church*. The circumstances, therefore, which took place when our Lord entered the temple, did but too plainly indicate what would, *in time*, be the state of the *christian church*. But this we pass by at present.

Now, as the temple was thus sacred and holy, and represented the spiritual church of the Lord, which was to come; it teaches us how pure and

undefiled his church ought to be. It is the house of the Lord, where he dwells, and in which, *while pure*, he delights; consequently it ought not to be made a house of merchandise; nothing of a worldly, evil, and defiling nature, should be found in it; and if men of such description enter in, the Lord knows them—his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor—he will drive out the buyers and sellers, the earthly-minded, the sensual and vain—all those who, under the guise of religion, are full of self-love, love of the world, hypocrisy, greedy of filthy lucre, unholy, and profane.

But, secondly, As the true church is the house of the Lord, the Lord is the ruler and governor in it—no one can dispute his authority. The Lord dwelleth in Zion, and he will sit as a refiner there, to refine the whole body, cast out what is evil and false, that the church may be a *holy temple*, a fit habitation for the Lord her God. But whenever the church comes into that unhallowed, profane, and impure state, as is represented by the circumstances connected with our text, then the Lord will withdraw from it, and leave it to be destroyed in and by its own evils and abominations, as surely as the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed; and not one stone left upon another.

But, thirdly, By the house of the Lord, or by the Father's house, is spiritually signified, *every man of the church*; and as this will bring the subject nearer to ourselves, I shall chiefly dwell upon it.

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The temple at Jerusalem represented every such person; and hence it is that every member of the church is called, in the New Testament, the temple of the Holy Ghost—the habitation of God—and God is said to dwell in them—make his abode with them, &c. The *interior* of every man's mind ought to be, and is designed to be, the residence of the Divine Being, viz. where he should dwell by his divine *love* and *wisdom*. There are in man two receptacles for the Lord—his *will* for the divine love, and his *understanding* for the divine wisdom; and when these are prepared for the Lord, and the Lord thus dwells therein, then the whole man is under the government and direction of the Lord: he is then the Lord's house, or temple.

Now as the temple at Jerusalem was to represent these things, so it was to be holy in every particular that belonged to it; hereby instructing us that the Lord is to dwell in the interiors of our minds, as his own temple; and that every thing belonging to man should be holiness unto the Lord; that his affections, his thoughts, desires, and dispositions, should be heavenly; that his life, conduct, and conversation, should be holy; that all within him, and belonging to him, should be pure: and thus, that he should be set apart *for*, and sanctified *to*, the Lord alone.

When we consider that we are the workmanship of the Almighty—that he hath made us rational beings, capable of knowing him, loving him, and
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and enjoying his presence and kingdom for ever—it appears very evident, that we can only be happy by being all that which will render us like him, and fit for his presence.

As, therefore, nothing *impure* or *evil* can exist *in*, or *with* the Lord; so whatever is of this kind must be removed from us, if we would live with and enjoy the Lord and his kingdom. The temple at Jerusalem was not designed for a house of merchandise, or a den of thieves; nor is the soul of man designed to be the habitation of those things to which merchandise and thieves correspond. We come therefore to consider,

Secondly, What we are to understand by making the Lord's house a house of merchandise.

What is meant, in the literal sense, we all very well know, viz. that it was devoting the sacred temple at Jerusalem to *trade*, *traffic*, and *temporal business*. The Jews made it a place for selling sheep, oxen, and doves; for paying and receiving money, and such like things:—this was certainly a profanation of the temple—employing it to purposes never designed—making a very bad use of it—and highly offensive to that God who had ordered it to be built for more sacred and holy designs. Now, if we apply this to man, we shall easily perceive what is spiritually represented in the above things. We read not of but *one temple* that the Lord commanded to be built, for his more immediate service and residence; and, *spiritually*,
God

God hath formed but one sacred and holy habitation for himself, and that is *man*. There are no other beings in earth or heaven, that are capable of being the temples of the Lord. The Lord created man, not only a beautiful, rational, and intelligent creature, but also a holy and undefiled one; *in* whom he might dwell by his divine love and wisdom—to whom he might communicate spiritual and celestial blessedness—and *with* whom he might reside for ever: he is, therefore (*viz. man*) an organ or form, receptive of life from the Lord his God; capable of living for ever with the Lord, and of enjoying all possible felicity in his kingdom. This, then, is the sacred and holy temple represented by that wonderful structure at Jerusalem.—The *internal*, therefore, or *mind* of every man, is designed to be the house of the Lord our God; but as the temple was polluted and profaned, so is the mind of man—it is become a house of merchandise, and a den of thieves; that is to say, man has *perverted* the *order of his life*, corrupted his will, polluted his understanding, and defiled his whole mind; he has made it a *house of merchandise*, by giving into the love of self, the love of the world, and the love of dominion. By the love of self, he has thirsted after whatever is sensual, vain, and earthly, in order to gratify his depraved and polluted appetites and desires; by the love of the world, he has been led to avarice, pride, hatred, envy, cruelty, and whatever appears calculated to
favor

favor his covetous, avaricious mind; and by the love of dominion, has aspired after greatness, dignity, and honor, at the expence and sacrifice of every virtue and noble principle, and is thus become ambitious, haughty, puffed up with vanity and high conceit, so as to despise others, contemn the mean, and envy the honorable; and thus he hath made the house of the Lord a house of merchandise;—that is, his soul, which should have been the habitation of the Lord, filled with love, charity, wisdom, goodness, and all that is spiritual and heavenly, is become a house of merchandise. Pleasure, riches, honor, are the objects of his pursuit; and whatever is likely to obtain those objects, *these* are his merchandise, his business, and employment.

But let it not be imagined here, that I mean to suggest, rational pleasures, riches and honors, are not to be enjoyed: for this would be to pervert all order in the natural world, and make it a thousand times more disagreeable than it is. What I mean, is, our *loving* these, making them our chief objects, placing our affections upon them, in preference to what is *spiritual* and *heavenly*. When, from a principle of love to man, a desire to be useful in life, we seek after riches or honors, then we act in divine order; because we love not the *things in themselves*, but the *usefulness* and *good* that arise from them to our fellow-creatures. But when our affections center in *self* and in the *world*, we act not from a principle of love and goodness; but from a perverted,

verted, polluted principle—and thus make the mind a house of merchandise, and, as our Lord says, a *den of thieves*. By a den of thieves, is signified whatever robs us of goodness, truth, and happiness; and whatever robs God of that *affection, honor, and service*, which are due to him—such as *self-love, sensual desires, love of the world, pride, covetousness, lust, hatred, envy, &c.* These are the *thieves* which take possession of the mind, when it is made a house of merchandise.

And how evident is it that they rob the man of every spiritual good and happiness. Man was not created for this world, but for a better; his capacious mind cannot be satisfied, or made happy, with the transitory bubbles of this short life; all the riches and honors in the world are not equal to one desire of an immortal soul; and all envy, hatred, pride, sensual lust, &c. are of an infernal nature, every way calculated to make men wretched and miserable; they are the disorders of a depraved mind, and must be removed, if we would enjoy health and pleasure.

Moreover, where these evils dwell, God is robbed of that affection, honor, and service, which are due to him.

First, as to *affection*. While we love self, the world, and evil, we cannot love the Lord our God, inasmuch as these loves are opposite each to other; consequently, his service and worship are neglected—we honor not his name by doing his will, nor by
devoting

devoting all the powers and faculties of the mind to him, and him alone. All these things were signified by the profanation of the temple in Jerusalem.

Proceed we therefore to consider, in the third place, What things are to be taken thence, and the reasons why.

“Take these things hence,” (saith the Lord) “and make not my father’s house an house of “merchandise.”

Now, sirs, it is plain, from what hath been said above, what those things are which must be removed from the mind of man, in order that he may be a pure and holy temple for the Lord.

First, All *sensual, worldly, and evil love*. Man was created to love God and his neighbour; and in such love his *real* happiness consists. The love of self, and of evil, is directly opposite to such love; therefore it *must* be removed. While he is under the influence of this affection, he cannot love God and heavenly things. Do we not daily see that men, who are influenced by this love, pay no regard to what is divine, or spiritual? Are they not pursuing every object that can gratify their own depraved will and inclination? And is it not truly said, that if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him? Does not the man of sensuality, of avarice, and of the world, continually employ his time, his thoughts, and all his powers, after these temporal and perishing objects? And what are

are the consequences of these pursuits, with this depraved love? Why, envy, hatred, cruelty, injustice, unmercifulness, and every abominable disposition and temper; and thus that house, or mind, which was designed to be the temple of the Lord, the habitation of his love, wisdom, truth, goodness, that so the man might be truly and solidly happy for ever, is become a den of thieves, a house of merchandise; the habitation of whatever is evil, infernal, and destructive to peace, happiness, and honor.

These, then, are the things that are to be taken away, that man may be restored to his original state—become the pure and holy temple of the Lord—and be happy in and with the Lord his God for ever. Self-love must give place to the love of others, love of the world, to the love of God; love of riches, honors, and the like, to the love of usefulness; pride give place to humility; envy to mercy; hatred to affection; and hell to heaven. The reasons why this change must take place is evident; for as man was created a form and image of God, that he might enjoy him and be happy, whatever prevents the accomplishment of this end must be removed. And as the Divine Being is a God of *love, mercy, goodness, truth, and purity*, the mind of man must be brought into such a state, that he may have conjunction with God. For light cannot dwell with darkness, evil with good, falsehood with truth, nor impurity with holiness; and as
every

every thing that can make man wretched, miserable, and unhappy, arises from *evil*; consequently, that evil must be relinquished and given up.

I believe too many suppose, that when the Lord so earnestly calls upon, and positively commands men to forsake their evils, and do that which is good; they suppose (I say) that the Lord does this merely from his own will, that *he will have it so*, without considering the absolute necessity for it; whereas it is all in divine mercy and compassion that the Lord requires this. For it is impossible for God himself (in the nature of things) to make men happy in any other way. That which causes their ruin and misery must be removed, before the effects can cease. Happiness arises from a conjunction with the Lord, a participation of his nature, a being the recipients of his love, wisdom, purity, and life. Every thing, therefore, which opposes or prevents this participation and reception, must be taken away, that the Lord may enter into his own house, or temple, the *mind*, and renew it into his own image and likeness; that so all blessedness and felicity may flow in from him, and complete the happiness of his creature, *man*.

What remains, then, but for us to conclude by the application of this subject to ourselves—first, as a church—and, secondly, as individuals.

Is the church of the Lord, in a more general manner, the Lord's house and temple? How holy and pure ought it then to be. In it there should
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be no impure, unholy, and polluted members; they belong not to the Lord's body, and therefore must one day be separated therefrom for ever—the man of self-love, love of the world, and of dominion, must not abide therein—the hypocrite, sensualist, avaricious—the proud, the envious, and uncharitable, will all be driven out when the Lord purgeth his floor. His temple, or church, must be pure, holy, and heavenly. In this life it is possible one may deceive another; many may pretend to be the Lord's people, when they are not so: their outward life may be regular, while internally they are under the influence of various evils and lusts. But no artifice or disguise can veil the mind from the penetrating eye of the Lord;—he knows all *hearts*, and every one will be received or rejected, according to his real internal state.

But, secondly, as individuals, let us apply the subject to ourselves.

The blessed God of love and mercy hath designed us to be holy temples for himself to dwell in; his will is to communicate to us every blessedness and felicity; to make us complete in happiness, glory, and honor for ever; to satisfy the *most extensive* desires of our minds; to give us the eternal enjoyment and possession of his kingdom, with all its beatitudes and pleasures, through the endless ages of eternity. And in order to our enjoying all this unspeakable glory, honor, and peace, what doth he require of us? Why no more than to put away

whatever would hinder and prevent that enjoyment ; to turn out every thief from our souls, which would rob us of this exquisite delight ; all self-love, love of the world, love of evil and falsehood, all envy, hatred, lust, covetousness, anger, cruelty, unmercifulness ; all those infernal demons who are consulting our ruin, and drawing us down to the gulf of misery, where they themselves are.

Is not this, then, a proof of infinite mercy in the Lord our God, that he requires nothing of us but to put away our own enemies ? that he may enter into his own house, the mind, with all his divine love and goodness, wisdom and truth, and so enrich us with every blessing and happiness. Can there be any thing that we have indulged to hinder this divine communication, that we will not most willingly part with for the Lord's sake, and for all the glories of his heavenly kingdom ? I would hope not.

Then take these things hence—make not your Father's house a house of merchandise, a den of thieves—expel, and cast out with indignation, all those sensual desires, evil lusts, and pernicious enemies, which you have unguardedly admitted—and return to the Lord, your most merciful God and Saviour, with an upright, humble, and sincere mind ; saying, ‘ Other lords have had dominion over us, but now we will give up all our affections, and all the powers of our minds to thee. Enter into thine own house, and make it a holy temple, in which thou
mayest

‘mayest dwell for ever.’ My christian friends, I can but earnestly call upon you, as well as upon myself, to give up every love, every evil, and every idol that will pollute the heart, and render us unfit for the divine presence, favor, and kingdom.

We are men and women, born to live with God—to enjoy the most sublime delights and pleasures—to live in heaven—to become angels—and to exist through eternal ages in all the felicity and happiness a God *can give*. What a pity is it that the *little, empty, unsatisfying* baubles of the world, and sin, should engross our affections, rob us of such inconceivable glory, and plunge us in everlasting disappointment, sorrow, and woe!

How much is it to be lamented, that while God is so kind, we are so unmerciful to ourselves—that while he is wooing us to be great, and honored, and happy—we are so solicitous to be poor, and mean, and wretched for ever!—“Take these things hence,” and make your Father’s house a house of love, charity, goodness, purity. Then will your Father enter, and all heaven with him, and you shall have every affection filled, every desire gratified, every wish compleated, every expectation accomplished, every power of the soul exalted, and all the mind a glorious heaven of love, joy, peace, honor, and felicity!

I can do no more than recommend this divine conduct to every one of you, wishing to observe it

myself; that all which is evil, and false, and hurtful, may be cast out; all that is good, true, and happy, may enter; and that thus we may all be the living temples of the Lord—holy and glorious angels in his kingdom above,—and with him enjoy all that heaven itself can give, through a *boundless, joyful, never-ending eternity*. Then will our reward be great, our joys complete, our state secure, our bliss divine, and heavenly love that bliss increase *for ever!*

us of such inconceivable glory, and plunge us in everlasting disappointment, sorrow, and woe!

How much is to be lamented, that while God is so kind, we are so unthankful to ourselves—that while he is wooing us to be great and honored, and happy—we are so foolish as to be poor, and mean, and wretched for ever!—"Take these 'things hence,' and make your Father's house a house of love, charity, goodness, purity. Then will your Father enter, and all heaven with him, and you shall have every affection filled, every desire gratified, every wish completed, every expectation accomplished, every power of the soul exerted;—all the mind a glorious heaven of

SERMON

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

HARSH JUDGMENT CONDEMNED;

OR,

CANDOR IN JUDGING OF THOSE WHO DIFFER FROM
US, RECOMMENDED.

MARK ix. 40.

For he that is not against us, is on our part.

HOW very difficult it is for men to divest themselves of long received prejudices, especially if those prejudices are of an evil or illiberal kind! The Jews, for many ages, had been accustomed to conceive of themselves as the peculiar favorites of heaven; as a *holy* nation; as the children of God; because of the seed of Abraham. Other nations they looked upon with contempt, would have no

dealings with them, and considered *themselves* as *superior* to all the rest of mankind, as to birth, nation, wisdom, religion, and in the estimate of the Divine Being. Such were the *fond notions* they entertained of themselves—and such their contemptible opinion of others. A *principle* this, which (in my judgment at least) is of a most infernal nature—directly opposite to the conduct and word of the blessed God—and altogether inconsistent with the character of a good man. God is no respecter of persons—he is good to all—his tender mercies are over all his works—he loves the whole world. His word teaches us universal benevolence, good-will, and charity; to love *all mankind* as we do ourselves. And the truly good man, the humble pious christian, entertains no prejudices against his fellow men—he says not to a Jew, to a Gentile, or a Mahometan, “*Stand by, for I am holier than thou!*” No, sirs, the humble mind cultivates no such sentiments, cherishes no such principles. If he considers any one person more *mean, unworthy, and impure* than another, it is himself which he views in that light, and not his neighbour; and would to God, that every one who names the name of the Lord, were in this humble state—this charitable disposition! What is the reason we are not? Why, we have too much self-love—we are too blind to our own evils—we are forward enough to inspect our neighbour’s conduct—we can, as with an eagle’s eye, see his faults—we can find a thousand failings in him,

him, and suspect a thousand more which we *cannot* find; but in our own *beloved selves* we can see *but few*, if any; those few, we have many ways to apologize for and excuse. And, alas! *self-examination* is a *disagreeable* work, with *much reluctance* we set about it, and generally leave it before it is *half done*. This is the true reason why christians, too frequently, think so highly of themselves, and so meanly of others. Their own evils they care not to notice; their own hearts and lives they like not to examine; but the faults of their neighbours are *readily seen*; the eye is not much pained at the sight—and we generally see them through a magnifying mirror; they appear *exceedingly large*—and it is but seldom we wish to *diminish* their *dimensions*. But if we deign to take a glance at our own evils, it is through an *inverted telescope*, which throws them at the utmost distance, and they appear *small* as the dust of the balance—diminutive as the least particle of sand.

Will it be thought a digression, if I call upon you, my fellow-christians, to give this subject its due weight? to consider its prevalence and influence? and examine how far it may apply to your own conduct? I am fully convinced this leaven of the Jews, found its way into the hearts of christians, at a *very early period*; and we have too great reason to believe there is some of it left at this day. *Self-love* is a very dangerous enemy to *humility*, *true wisdom*, and *charity*—while under the influence

of *self-love*, we are *proud, haughty, high-minded*; we see not our own imperfections, and if we do, we call them *virtues*. TRUE WISDOM cannot dwell with *self-love*, and what is true wisdom, but to *know ourselves aright*? Where this prevails *self-love* must die. This shews us our true character; that we are in ourselves *mere evil*; that we have nothing in us good or true, but what is from the Lord alone; and when we have obtained this wisdom, we shall be *humble*—our opinion of others will be founded in charity; their *faults* will be *lessened*, their *virtues* *magnified*—we shall esteem others better than ourselves—and the most exceptionable character we shall find among christians, will be *OUR OWN*.

My worthy friends, let me entreat you to cultivate *self-knowledge*—make yourselves acquainted *with yourselves*—you have an *infallible rule to judge by*—that rule is the truth of God. There we learn what man *was*, what man *ought to be*, and what man *is*. If we examine our hearts, thoughts, affections, dispositions, and life, by that unerring word, we shall *soon, very soon*, know so much of ourselves, of our *true character*, our *real state*, as to cover ourselves in dust and ashes, blush at our own picture, and stand self condemned for thinking meanly of, and judging others.

Moreover, this true wisdom, when obtained, will convince us that we comparatively know *nothing*; and therefore it will totally eradicate that *narrow sentiment*,

sentiment, that contracted idea, which the disciples of our divine Lord discovered in the verses connected with our text—"Master, we saw one casting out devils IN THY NAME, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us." Here was a man *doing good, great good, even casting out devils*, and this he did in the *name of Jesus Christ* too. But he followed not these disciples—he did not go exactly with them—he did not observe every punctilio which *they* thought right—in *some circumstantial*s he did not altogether agree with them. And behold they took upon them to forbid him. 'You must not cast out devils—you must not *do good*—you must not befriend these poor miserable wretches, who are possessed with demons. We command you to forbear.' 'But why, sirs? What is the reason I am not to do good? And why may I not honor my Lord and Saviour by doing good in his name? How is it that you forbid me?' They answer, 'Because you follow not us. If you do good you must do it in our way—you must take us for your guide—we will *lead*, and you must *follow*.'

What a bigotted spirit! What a mistaken zeal, manifested in this instance! And is it not too much the case in our day, in this enlightened age? Every distinct society of professing christians think themselves right—let them think so, till convinced to the contrary; but let them not pretend to *infallibility*, condemn others, and deem them no christians, because

because they differ from them in judgment. This is going too far—and Jesus will reprove them. Hear his mild and gracious answer to his mistaken disciples—"Forbid them not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." As much as though our Lord had said, 'Let these men alone; give them leave to judge for themselves; permit them to use their own freedom—it is not your province to judge of their interiors—their motives. If they are doing good in my name, they cannot speak lightly of me—they are on the side of goodness, charity, and usefulness. Let them go on—he that is not against us, is on our part.'

THIS, my christian friends, THIS is the divine principle which ought to prevail in every good man's breast. If *this* prevailed, what would become of *persecution* for conscience sake? It would be confined to hell, its proper place. What would become of *fery opposition, hatred, variance, and enmities*? Why they would be banished for ever. Where would be all that *shyness, dislike, jealousy, and coolness*, which we cannot help lamenting in this day? Why they would disappear, and be known no more. O! how do I long to see *christians united—good men and women in friendship, harmony, and peace*. United in SENTIMENT, if possible; but, however, IN AFFECTION, IN CHARITY, IN LOVE.

Surely

Surely the day is approaching very fast, is near at hand, when we shall no more wish to call down fire from heaven, to destroy those who differ from us in judgment; when we shall no more forbid men to do good, because they walk not in every step with us. The time is at hand, I trust, when the light of the heavenly sun shall be *seven-fold*—when its *divine* heat, its *ardent beams*, shall warm the christian's heart with *love intense*—*with love* that shall burn up and consume all opposition, hatred, and enmity—*love* that shall unite *heart to heart, man to man*, and cordially bid God speed, to every one who is *useful*, and who is living a *good life* from principles of *charity* and *faith*. And when this *love prevails, wisdom will abound*. *Goodness* in the *heart*, will lead to *truth* in the *understanding*; in proportion as *humility, charity, and union* are encouraged—the divine influx of wisdom from the Lord will descend into the intellects—the cheering rays of truth will illumine every mind—beam round us one eternal day—the Lord God himself give us light—and we shall reign for ever and ever. I anticipate this glorious time with heart-felt rapture! and have no doubt of its real and certain accomplishment. Heaven and earth contribute towards it at this day—the great Jehovah is fulfilling his prophecies—the shades of night begin to withdraw—and the dawning beams of heaven's bright sun appear.

And

And as it would afford me unspeakable happiness, to be an instrument in the Lord's hands of removing one cloud out of the way; I will, therefore, take the liberty of laying before you a few lessons of instruction, taught us from our text; and which will, I humbly hope, in some degree contribute towards the admission of further heat and light from the divine sun of heaven into our souls.

The first lesson taught us by our Divine Lord in these words, is, that every man should have liberty to judge for himself, in all matters of religion and conscience. What I mean, is, that one man ought not to condemn another, because he differs from him in his judgment. There are many reasons to be given why this difference takes place; and in the present state of things, it seems hardly possible that it should be otherwise. But if another differs from me, in *my* opinion very essentially, I am not to condemn him for so doing. It may be, if I had been in his situation, under the like circumstances, exposed to the same disadvantages, or liable to the like prejudices, I should have thought in the *same manner*. And what is still more, it is possible, that the very doctrines and opinions I blame him for espousing, may be much nearer the truth, than those I maintain myself. Every honest man, certainly, believes his own system true; but that does not prove that *it is so*—for every *honest man* is not an *infallible man*. How reason-

reasonable, therefore, is it, that every one should judge for himself. Suppose we were to select out of this congregation *ten men*, each of which differed from the other in religious opinion—which of these is to say to the other nine, ‘You are all wrong; you must believe and judge as I do; you must receive my system; and, if you do not, you are no christians—you cannot be saved?’ Not one would have a right so to speak. And why? Because not one of them is *infallible*. Let us, then, suffer every one to judge for himself, and rather say, ‘He who is not against the Lord, is on his side.’

If we can convince our brother, by rational argument and plain scripture, that he is wrong, let us do it by all means; but if we cannot, leave him to enjoy his own sentiments, and to give account to his own God. If he be *sincere* in his profession, *upright* in his judgment, and in the *good* of life, he is accepted of the Lord, and will no doubt be happy in his kingdom. As, therefore, we ought not by any means to condemn another, on account of his judgment, but should leave every one to think and determine for himself—certainly, then, *persecution* of any kind must be *wicked and infernal*. To injure another in his property, deprive him of his liberty, cast him into prison, and take away his life, are degrees of persecution which I hope will never more be known in a christian land; but even *variance, enmity, and hatred*, manifested towards another, on account of his religious sentiments, is
actual

actual persecution—and sincerely do I wish that *this* may never more exist in the world. If we cannot approve the doctrines of others, let us value them as men, love them as christians, and bear with them in true charity, being conscious of our own imperfections and mistakes. But,

Secondly, We are taught by the passage, that men may very widely differ in doctrine, opinion, and judgment; and yet be on the Lord's side. This is evident in the instance before us. Here was a man casting out devils—this was a *great work*—it was a *good* and *charitable work*—and it was done in the name of the Lord too—and, nevertheless, he did not follow the disciples. This man was on the Lord's part; he was opposing the kingdom of Satan, doing good to mankind, and exalting the name of the Lord. There is but one *name*, one *power*, by which devils can be cast out; but there may be various ways in which that power is manifested. So it may be that many in our day, as ministers and teachers, may be casting out devils, in a spiritual sense. By their preaching, advice, and instruction, many may turn from their evil ways, give up their iniquities, believe in the Lord, and live a good life; and all this may be done in the name and by the power of the Lord—and yet these men may not follow us—may differ widely from us. But are we to *forbid them*—to hinder their doing good? No, God forbid! they are on the Lord's side—and where they cast out one devil,
where

where they do one good deed, may they do a thousand. Shall we persecute them, hate them, be at variance and enmity with them, because they do not think just as we do—walk not exactly in our steps? No, surely.

Again, there may be many who are in the name of the Lord, casting out from their own hearts, the demons of pride, lust, self-love, sensuality, hatred, and a thousand other evils; desiring to live a good life, to obey the laws of Jesus; to be useful, holy, and happy—and in *sentiment* they are far from us. Yet these are on the Lord's side. Would it be prudent in us to say to them, 'You must first agree with us in opinion—you must think just as we do—receive all our doctrines and views, before you attempt to reform your lives, or relinquish your evils?' We are convinced how *imprudent*, and *improper* this would be. Then let us be very cautious how we judge of men.

But, thirdly, we are instructed by the words, accurately to decide whether those who differ from us are *for* the Lord, or *against* him; and here are *three* rules to determine by—the first is, the *casting out devils*—the second is, doing this in the name of the Lord—and the third is, that such cannot speak lightly of Jesus Christ.

And, first, By casting out devils, I do not mean a miracle performed; but what that miracle corresponded to, and represented—and that is, putting away, or casting out, what is evil in heart and life.

Although

Although another may dissent from us in opinion, hold doctrines which we disavow; yet if he be striving against all evil, subduing his lusts, his passions, his sensual propensities; if he be regulating his life by divine laws, and shunning evils as sins against God, he is on the Lord's side; he deserves our affection and esteem—and if we discover any enmity or dislike towards him, because he holds some notions different from our own, we manifest but little of the true christian spirit. The man may be in the false of doctrine, but he is in the good of life; and, it may be, much higher in the heavenly life than ourselves. Rather than fall out with him, it would be well for us to cast out the demons of bigotry, superstition, and party-spirit, which dwell in our own breasts.

But, secondly, When a man does the above work in the *name of the Lord*, we may assure ourselves he is on the Lord's side. In the name of the Lord, I understand not only by the *power* of the Lord, but from love to the Lord, faith in him, and a sincere regard to his holy laws. A man may refrain from external evils from various external causes, and from very evil motives; but if he departs from evil, both external and internal, from pure love to God, genuine faith in him, and a sincere regard to divine laws, he does it from the *best of motives*, the *soundest principles*; he is a good man, a real christian, and we must bid him God speed!—Wherever we see such characters, let us love them—let

—let us venerate them—and rather than forbid them, *let us go and do likewise.*

But, thirdly, The next rule is, that such cannot speak lightly of Jesus Christ. If they do not exalt him so highly as we could wish—if they have not the clearest ideas of his eternal Divinity and Godhead—they can but *reverence* his name—they must admire and adore him. They cannot speak lightly of his authority, of his love and mercy, of his redemption; they cannot despise his laws, abuse his goodness, or neglect his will; and continuing in love, obedience, and faith, their mistakes in judgment will ere long be removed, and the Saviour they love will be the God they adore.

But I must proceed, in the fourth place, to observe, what ought to unite all christians in bonds of love, harmony, and peace. I hope none of my hearers will think my ideas *too liberal*, my judgment *too charitable*; I am extremely desirous of seeing all pious christians of one heart, of one mind, and of one life. And although I may not live to see it, yet I am persuaded it will be so ere long; and if I were to die to-morrow, I wish to leave behind me a testimony that it was the most ardent wish of my soul.

What then ought to unite us in affection and life as christians? Why, sirs, these three things following—love to the Lord Jesus Christ, charity one to another, and a good life. By loving the Lord, I mean, the loving him with all the heart,
P
foul,

soul, mind, and strength; a love that engages us to depend wholly upon him, trust in him, worship him in spirit and in truth, and obey his holy laws *conscientiously, faithfully, and with delight*. By charity one to another, I mean, the loving my *neighbour*, my fellow christian, as I love myself; rejoicing in his welfare, seeking his good, wishing him as happy as I wish myself, and doing all I can to promote it. And by a *good life*, I mean, an obedience to the divine will, from *faith and love*; discharging the duties of religious, moral, and civil life, as a man, a christian, a follower of the Lord. Whoever, therefore, possesseth this *love, charity, and goodness*, that person I acknowledge as my fellow-christian—my brother in the Lord. He is the favorite of heaven, an heir of glory, and he will soon stand a bright and happy angel in the kingdom of his God.

Here, then, is a *solid foundation* for harmony, union, and love. Are we such christians? Doth our conscience bear witness? If so, must we not be united in affection? Must we not love one another?

My good friends, I believe while I am discoursing upon this divine subject, you are ready to grasp each other in the arms of christian affection and love. You know it is morally impossible for you all to think exactly alike, to speak alike, or act alike; but you can all love the Lord, you can all love each other, and you can all live a good life—and this is heaven. This makes you of one family, constitutes you sons and daughters of God, entitles you

you to the kingdom of glory ! You are in the high road to it—the gates are just before you—and there you are to live together in *love, harmony, and peace*, for ever. Surely, then, you are ready to say, in the words of our text, “ He who is not against the “ Lord is on our part.” You can take your fellow-christian by the hand—the divine fire of heavenly love and charity kindles in your hearts—and as christians you feel such an *union of souls*, as neither time nor death can obliterate. Such a *divine union*, such a *heavenly love*, as shall *endear* you to each other in glory—as shall *ripen* in eternity—and *flourish for ever there*.

Transporting thought ! How great that bliss must prove,
Where hearts are one, and every heart is love ;
Where parties, names, divisions, ever cease,
And all in union, harmony, and peace.
Where *discord, envy, variance*, never rise,
To break our peace, or interrupt our joys.
Where *angels, heaven*, and all its *hosts* conspire,
To fan the flame of love—that holy fire.—
Where, in one word, our life, our heav'n shall prove
One everlasting scene of peace and love !

SERMON XV.

JESUS CHRIST THE ONE TRUE GOD:

A SERMON ON THE NATIVITY.

MATT. i. 23.

And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is,
God with us.

IT has been thought good, by the rulers of this land, to appoint and set apart a *time* for the commemoration of that infinitely glorious and merciful event, *the nativity of our divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. The appointment, no doubt, was with a good and laudable design, that christians in general might unite in a *sober, holy, thankful, and joyful* remembrance of their Saviour's natal day—publicly celebrate his praise—and offer the sacrifice of a grateful heart to his adorable name.

In

In the chapter before us the evangelist is giving us a brief account of the Lord's birth, as revealed to Joseph by an angel. He tells us, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, *God with us.*" The prophet to which Matthew alludes is Isaiah, and the words are in the 14th verse of his seventh chapter. It appears to me that upon reading these words on the occasion, the following inquiries will naturally take place.

First, Who is this Emmanuel?

Secondly, With what motive and design did he come?

Thirdly, What did he do to accomplish that design?

Fourthly, In what way may we receive the advantage of it?

And, lastly, What suitable returns can we make to him, and in what manner?

For our present mutual edification we will make a few remarks upon each of these enquiries. And,

First, Who is this Emmanuel?

That the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, appeared as an infant, and is the Saviour of men, all christians universally are agreed in; but *who* the Lord Jesus is, with his *true character*, christians

tians are not agreed in. By some he is believed to be a *good man*, and a *great prophet*, but *nothing more*; by others he is supposed to partake of the *divine nature*, and is a *God*. Numberless, indeed, are the opinions of men concerning the Lord—we cannot now enter into particulars—it is sufficient to say, that *some* wholly deny his divinity; that most acknowledge his divinity, own he is God, say he is the second person in the trinity, equal with the Father though *not* the Father; yet, in some way or other, is supposed to be one with the Father, by a kind of union, which it is not easy to explain. To enter far into this controversy, is not my present design. I will only observe, that as to those who deny the divinity of the Lord, and declare him to be *only a man*, revelation is expressly against them. His names, character, attributes, work, and words, with the uniform testimony of prophets and apostles, all positively declare him to be God. And as to such as acknowledge his divinity, say that he is God, the second person in the trinity, but not the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the *only God*; reason and revelation appear to be expressly against their views also.

As we have frequently endeavored to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *only God of heaven and earth*, it will be the less needful for me to enlarge upon that subject now; nevertheless, as all our other doctrines and sentiments, of a religious kind, take their quality from the notions we form of the
Divine

Divine Being, and are either true or false, according to those notions; it certainly is of the utmost importance that we have just and scriptural conceptions of the Divine Being.

Our text informs us, that the Lord Jesus is Emmanuel, or God with us; and the apostle says, "*God was manifested in the FLESH*—that in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—and that he is the true God and eternal life." Now if the Lord Jesus Christ be God with us, God manifest in the flesh; then he either is the *only God*, or there was another God which was *not* manifest in the flesh—so that there is one manifested God, and another unmanifested God; consequently, there must be two distinct Gods. But both reason and scripture tell us *this cannot be*.

Again, if the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he be the true God and eternal life; then no part of Godhead can dwell elsewhere, nor any other being be the *true God*. And if he be *eternal life*, he must be the *only life*, and consequently the *only God*. The great and grand truth which will obviate all these difficulties, is, that the Lord Jesus Christ is, as to his humanity, the Son—as to his divinity, the Father—and as to his divine operation, the Holy Spirit—the one eternal JEHOVAH, the only living and true God *in one divine person*; he being in his own divine essence invisible *to*, and unapproachable *by*, his creatures, hath clothed himself with a divine humanity,

and is properly and truly God and man in one person. All the names, titles, attributes, qualities, and perfections, that belong to the one eternal God, are applied to him. He is the Creator, Saviour, Redeemer, King of Kings, Alpha and Omega, Almighty, the true God and eternal Life, I Am, Jehovah, the *only* living and true God, to whom alone be worship, adoration, and praise for ever. He is then (according to our text) our *Emmanuel*, *God with us*; God revealed in the flesh; God made known to men; the foundation, center, and source of all our salvation, happiness, and peace. While, then, we celebrate the natal day of our Lord, let us be careful that our gratitude and thankfulness be acceptable to him, by acknowledging him to be the only living and true God in his divine humanity.

Let us now, in the second place, consider with what motive and design the Lord came.

On this subject we need not greatly enlarge. We all know (speaking after the manner of men) that the *true motive*, the *moving cause* of our Lord's coming into the world, was MERCY. God is *love itself*, and consequently all his creatures are objects of his love; in love they were created, in love they are preserved, and in love they are provided for and blessed with every good. But notwithstanding the Lord loves his creatures, his rational offspring (of which we are now speaking) yet it is well known that they *have fallen from him*; that they

they are sunk into *evil* and *consequent ruin*. This they have done by averting themselves from the Lord, giving into an impure propriety, becoming sensual, earthly, and wicked; in this state they must, as to their own power, unavoidably remain. Having made evil and falsehood their *life*, in that life must they continue, bearing all the effects of it both here and hereafter. Now in this state they were not *greater objects* of *love* than *before*, we must all know; but they were *greater objects* of *pity*, *mercy*, and *compassion*: that is to say, pity or mercy from the Lord their Creator, became essentially necessary to their deliverance, redemption, and salvation—and this mercy is manifested unto them by the Lord, inasmuch as the Lord is *love* itself; therefore it pleased him, from this divine motive, to come into the world for their salvation. Hence it is said by Isaiah, lxiii. 9, “In his love, and in “his pity, he redeemed them.”

Indeed our reason, as well as revelation, must convince us, that our redemption and deliverance must flow from the Lord's divine mercy alone; and we shall do well to remember that his tender mercies are over all his works—that his pity extended to all his fallen children. Let us not imagine that our God of love and goodness can shew mercy and compassion to *one*, and withhold them from *another*, in the same fallen state, and equally standing in need of it. No, this is what can never be the conduct of a God of love; nay, it could
not

not be the conduct of a kind parent, so fallen as the world is. Where could you possibly find a man, or a woman, who were worthy the name of parent, that on condition all their children had proved unruly or disobedient, and in consequence thereof were in prison, and condemned to a most tormenting death, and these parents had it in their power to offer deliverance, not to one only, but to all of them; where, I say, is the parent who would not fly to their relief, and freely save them all from so severe a punishment? And if *man*, poor erring fallen *man* would be thus kind—if he would shew such mercy—how much more the most merciful and compassionate God of love and goodness?—Yes, in his love, and in his pity, he came to redeem, and make salvation possible to all mankind. His *motive* was *mercy*—and his *design* to *save*. And I am confident, the more we examine into the character, attributes, and perfections of the Lord, the more fully shall we be convinced that he is a God of boundless love, infinite mercy, and universal philanthropy, or good-will. But as I hope I have not any before me but will acknowledge, and do cordially believe in the love and mercy of the Lord to all mankind, and who are convinced that his motive in coming was *mercy*, and his design to *save*; we will proceed,

Thirdly, To notice *what* the Lord actually did to accomplish that design, when he appeared in our nature.

As

As this subject is of *vast importance*, I shall take the liberty of being a little more particular upon it than upon the former.

And, first, To obviate some mistakes upon this head, I will just notice what the Lord did *not do*.

And, first, He did not come to *reconcile the Father to mankind*: to suppose he did, is, first, *unscriptural*; and, secondly, *irrational*. The word of God nowhere declares, that there ever was a time in which God was *not* reconciled to men; but the apostle declares, that "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world to himself*;" not *himself to the world*. The supposition is also *irrational*—for Jesus Christ could not come to reconcile the *Father to men*; because he himself is the *Father* as to his divinity. Hence it is that the apostle says, "*God was in Christ*;" that is, the divinity in the humanity; or, as in our text, "God with us;" or God manifest in the flesh. The Lord being the *only true God*, there could not be another God to *reconcile*; secondly, neither did the Lord come to appease *divine wrath*—for there was no divine wrath to *appease*. God is *love* and not *wrath*; and although *wrath*, in the letter of the word, is frequently predicated of the Divine Being; this is only in appearance, and not *really* so. For wrath must argue *imperfection*, which is incompatible with the Divine Being. But it is the divine love of the Lord which appears as wrath to a wicked and ungodly man; because the state of his mind is such, that the divine sphere of heaven-
venly

venly love would be to him as a consuming fire—therefore to him it appears as wrath. But as to any actual wrath existing in God, it is impossible, being directly contrary to his nature and perfections; therefore it cannot be *appeased*.

Thirdly, Neither did the Lord come to suffer the punishment due to sinners, and thus atone divine justice; for such a *punishment* was *impossible*, and such an *atonement* *unnecessary*. Punishment arises from *conscious guilt*, is inseparably attendant upon evil, and can only belong to the sinner himself. But the Lord had no conscious guilt—did not do any evil—he was not a sinner; consequently, the punishment due to sin he could not actually bear: and as to an *atonement* of divine justice, it was unnecessary. Redemption does not consist in making an atonement, by another, to justice; but in extending mercy to a fallen miserable sinner;—in restoring him from that fallen state unto a life of goodness, truth, and happiness. For if a thousand atonements were made by another for our sins, we should still be as miserable as ever, until delivered from sin itself by regeneration and newness of life. Beside, the doctrine of atonement, satisfaction, and vicarious sacrifice, all depend upon the idea of more Gods than one; because it is asserted, *that* sacrifice and atonement was an adequate punishment for the sins of those for whom the Lord died, inasmuch as it was an *infinite one*; and it was an infinite one, they say, because it was the sacrifice of a God:

a God: consequently, according to this notion one God made atonement to another—and therefore there are more Gods than *one*. But as this cannot be—as God is one, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself is that God, he could not come into the world for any of the above named purposes. What then did the Lord actually come *for*, and *do*, when he assumed our nature? Why he came to subdue the powers of hell, redeem mankind, make salvation possible to all, to glorify his humanity, and be a Redeemer and Saviour to all eternity. By subduing the powers of hell, more is included than perhaps would be received by some, were I to lay it before them; however, that evil spirits are attendant upon man—that they tempt, or influence, to whatever is evil and vile—that they seek to destroy our souls—and that, while in evil, we are led captive by them—are acknowledged by the christian church in general. And that their subjugation, or our deliverance from them, is of the Lord, all will, I presume, allow. And that the Lord did subdue them, you may see in the 59th and 63d chapters of Isaiah, with many other places.

But time will not allow of enlargement upon these subjects. That the Lord came to redeem mankind is so obvious, from a thousand places in the word, that the truth of it cannot be doubted; and that he made salvation possible to all men, is equally as plain from the word. These are subjects which have been frequently discussed, and which, I hope,

hope, will often engage our attention; but it is not my design to dwell upon them now, as each one would require a whole discourse: let it suffice to say, that to be delivered from the power and influence of infernals—to be redeemed from all iniquity in heart and life—to be restored to heavenly love, goodness, truth, and purity—and thus to be made happy in heaven for ever—was the grand and merciful design of our Lord God and Saviour, in coming into the world. And that he may thus be a Redeemer and Saviour to all eternity, he glorified his humanity by making it divine, and thereby can keep the powers of hell in eternal subjection. He is, therefore, continually redeeming and saving all those who believe on him, and desire to be saved by him.

Which leads me, fourthly, just to notice the way by which we may obtain this salvation and happiness.

As I am addressing myself to a christian audience, it is not necessary to say a great deal on this head. We have the bible in our hands, and the directions are there laid down in so clear a manner, that we cannot well mistake, if guided by that alone. However, it may be proper to observe, that the way to obtain this salvation and happiness, is, to do what the Lord commands us—to receive what the Lord gives—and to be what he would have us. Let us remember we are men, rational men, men of liberty and freedom; or we could not be men

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at all if we had not this rationality, freedom, and liberty: therefore we are to *resist evil, repent of it, and put it away*. This we may do, we can do it, because we have the power from the Lord, as men so to do; we can turn our minds from what is evil to what is good, from what is false to what is true:—It is this turning of the mind, and forsaking evil, which the Lord requires in so many parts of his holy word—and in proportion as we turn away from and forsake what is evil and false, in the like proportion are our minds open to the reception of the divine influence from the Lord. By thus shunning all evils, as sins against the Lord, believing on him, and desiring his salvation; our minds are open to the influx of his love and wisdom, goodness and truth—by the power of which our internal man is regenerated, and we become such as the Lord desires us to be; that is, men of love, charity, truth, and goodness. As we increase herein, our regeneration is effected—our salvation completed—and our true happiness advanced. In short, let us ever consider what the Lord, as our Redeemer and Saviour, has done, and is doing for us; and what we, as men of freedom and rationality, are to do, as co-operating with the Lord; at the same time recollecting, that all our freedom, power, and rationality, are from him alone—and, therefore, that all our redemption, salvation, and happiness, are of the Lord, and of him only.

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Let us now, in the last place, consider what suitable returns we can make to the Lord, at this season, in commemoration of his nativity, and in what manner we are to make them.

Great, indeed, is the event; yea, the greatest ever known—when the Almighty Jehovah, who is the Lord of all creation, became a babe, appeared on earth as man, to save a sinking world from sin, from endless ruin and death, and to raise our race to heaven, and everlasting happiness. What returns can we make but those of gratitude, of love, of joy and thankfulness, of praise and adoration!

Our sacrifices ought to rise to him warm from the heart; and, if possible, be as *pure* as those which the angels in heaven offer to his adorable name, while we are celebrating the illustrious day in which the Lord Jesus was born. But let us not imagine that profane mirth, the low effusions of a sensual mind, the noisy clamors of intemperance, or the discordant songs of inebriate souls, will be pleasing to the ear of the Saviour, or find his approbation. No, sirs, no; our joy, our gratitude, and praise, must flow from pure love, from love to him who is our God, our Saviour, and our best of friends. This love is pure, it elevates the soul far above all sensual and sordid joy; it raises it to gratitude and praise of the purest and most heavenly kind—but it does not debar us any good of life, or rational amusement. The social meeting, the liberal

liberal board, cheerful conversation, or the friendly treat, when guided by prudence, and ruled by virtue, are all free for man. Then, if we would celebrate the natal day of our Redeemer and our God, in the manner he approves, let our gratitude, our praise, and joy, arise to him from hearts inspired with love, full of charity, truth, and goodness; and with a life which accords with those divine laws he came to teach us. Then, while we praise his name, and worship him alone in heart and life, all his redemption and salvation will be our own.

As years roll round, and bring to our remembrance his natal day, we shall, with increasing joy and pleasure, celebrate his love and mercy. But this is not all, his second advent now opens to our view—he is come again to bless a sinking world—to reveal his glory to the sons of men—and to teach us that he is God alone in his divine humanity.

His second advent with his first we'll sing,
And hail Jehovah welcome as our King!
His glories beam with bright effulgence round—
Ten thousand heav'nly blessings now abound.
All christians soon shall know he's come again,
With hearts enraptur'd, triumph in his reign:
One gen'ral chorus from mankind shall rise,
Join with the noble concert of the skies;
Angels and men in one loud anthem sing,
Jesus *alone* is Saviour, God, and King!

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SERMON

200 THE TRUE GOD.

SERMON XVI.

THE GOOD MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS,

AND

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS.

PSALM xvii. 15.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied,
when I awake, with thy likeness.

THIS psalm, in its *first* and *highest* sense, respects the Lord Jesus Christ; it is descriptive of that opposition and hatred he met with by men, when in this world, as well as by infernals; and also his victory over them all. But it likewise applies to the *good man*; his oppositions, temptations, and deliverance. It is a prayer of divine faith and confidence, offered up to the Lord for protection, defence, and salvation. And the words
may

may be adopted with great propriety, by all those who put their trust in the Lord, love his name, and walk in his commandments. Such as can say, as in the words of our text, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

In speaking from these words, we will,

First, Consider the good man's resolution—"I will behold thy face in righteousness." And,

Secondly, His expectation OF, and confidence IN, future happiness:—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Lastly, Apply the subjects to our own minds.

And first, As to the resolution declared.

It will be necessary here to consider, what is to be understood by the FACE of the Lord—what by BEHOLDING it—and what by beholding it in RIGHTEOUSNESS.

By the face of the Lord, is generally meant, in the word, *mercy, peace, and every good*; as may appear from a number of passages. See Num. vi. 25, 26, "Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be *merciful* unto thee; Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee *PEACE*;" and Psalm lxvii. 1, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his *face* to shine upon us." Isa. lix. 2, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have

“hid his *face* from you:” that is, his *mercy, goodness, &c.* are hid from you by your iniquities. So it is said, Matt. xxvi. 67, that the Jews spit in the face of Jesus Christ; which signifies that they refused, abused, and despised his mercy and goodness. But perhaps you will reply, “Is it not said “in Rev. vi. 16, that the wicked called to the “mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide “them from the FACE of him that sat on the “throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” Can “this mean the mercy, love, and goodness of “Jehovah?” Most assuredly it does; and nothing else. The divine sphere of heavenly love and goodness, which beams from the eternal Jehovah in his glorified humanity, is what appears to infernals as *wrath*; because it is directly opposite and contrary to their infernal love and life. Nor could the wicked live in the heat of that divine love, or *bear its influence*—hence, whenever they *approach* that divine sphere, they feel torment and pain, and are ready to fly any where to be free from its influence. The Lord our God is love, mercy, and goodness, *essentially and eternally* so; and by his *face* nothing less is meant. By BEHOLDING the face of the Lord, is signified to *look up to the Lord, believe on him, trust in him*. So the Lord says, “Look unto “me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” To *behold*, or *look to the Lord*, is *predicated* of the UNDERSTANDING; and implies a *knowledge* of him, of his *character, attributes, and nature*. To behold him

him revealed in his holy word, as our *God, Redeemer, Lord, teacher*; to look up to him for *salvation, protection, instruction, and every good*; to depend upon him WHOLLY and CONSTANTLY, for all we want. All this, and much more, is implied in beholding the face of the Lord.

But, thirdly, “ I will behold thy face in RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

This phrase includes in it much more than most who read it, imagine. Those who suppose they can find the righteousness of the Lord Jesus in every place where this *word* is found, will say that what is meant here is, that the *real christian* will only look to the Lord, or can only expect to behold his face, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to him. But no such thing is here intended, as the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is altogether impossible, it being the righteousness of God himself, and wholly divine, as we have before observed and proved. By righteousness, in this text, is meant nothing less than a good and heavenly life, from love and faith. And it may be illustrated thus: ‘ As for me, whatever others do, I will ‘ behold thy face; I will look up to thee *by faith*; ‘ and I will continually so do, *in righteousness*: that ‘ is, while I believe on thee, and trust in thee, I ‘ will, from love to thy name, walk in thy commandments; live a good and heavenly life—I ‘ will depart from all known evil, and do that which ‘ is good and right, according to thy word.’

All this is implied in the words. For were a man to behold the Lord's face every day, it would *avail him nothing*, without a principle of love and charity, manifested in the life and conduct. It is well to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our God and Saviour—to trust in him—depend upon his mercy and goodness for every blessing—expect salvation and happiness from him alone, of his free grace and mercy; but, at the same time, all this dependance and faith will be of no use, unless a *good life*, a life of love and holiness, be connected with it.

I will look up to thee, or behold thy face in righteousness—while I am expecting the constant influence of thy love and wisdom, I will improve what I have already received, to thy glory and my own good, by departing from evil, and doing that which is right. This ought to be the determination of all who profess faith in the Lord, and who expect to awake in his likeness. But I may observe to you, that no one beholds the face of the Lord any farther than as he is in goodness and truth; for to behold the face of the Lord, is to turn the *mind* to him—to give up the understanding and will to the Lord—so that every man really beholds the face of the Lord so far, and no farther, than as he is in the love of goodness and truth.

Let us, then, take care we do not deceive ourselves. While we suppose we believe in the Lord, let us be assured that we *love* him; while we depend upon

upon him, and trust in him, may we be conscious that we depart from evil and obey him. To behold the face of the Lord, is to know his *mercy, goodness, and truth*; and to LOVE THEM. For then the whole *mind, the will and understanding*, are turned to, and fixed upon the Lord. We have him, as David says, before our eyes; we know he sees us, and we spiritually behold him; we will not therefore, do any thing that would offend him—his will is our delight—we choose to walk before him in *truth and righteousness*.

I cannot tell, my christian friends, what influence you feel from these thoughts; but to me they are most *pleasing and animating*. To behold the face of the Lord, to see his *mercy, love, goodness, and truth*, before our eyes daily; to delight in this view of Jehovah; and to be assimilated into his image, while we behold him; to be transformed into love and goodness, while we behold him who is the essence thereof; and thus to have conjunction with the Lord, is to me little less than heaven itself. How much is this view of the Lord *above and superior*, to that *poor, dead, inactive faith*, of which so many boast in our day! a faith that forms no conjunction with heaven—brings no divine blessings down—nor raises the soul thither. Be careful, then, to behold the face of Jehovah *in righteousness*. Let love purify thy heart, truth thy understanding, and BOTH thy internal and external life; that so you may have conjunction with the Lord your God,
and

and be happy. Men may talk of faith as much and as long as they please, but I am well assured, that faith is not faith until it be grounded in love, and determind to righteousness, or obedience to the divine will, and holy laws of God our Saviour. 'Till this is the case, we behold not the face of the Lord; we are in obscurity and darkness; our religion is an *ignis fatuus*; and will end in *disappointment* and *despair*. But if you behold the face of Jehovah, the *mercy*, *goodness*, and *truth* of the Lord—and that view causes you to *love him*, *confide in him*, and *cheerfully obey his will*; then you walk in the *light*, your religion is *genuine*, a DIVINE REALITY—and thus living, there is nothing *too great*, *too good*, or *too heavenly* for you to expect from that God of love and truth, whose children and disciples you are.

I will, therefore, leave this subject by earnestly recommending to each of you *such a faith*, and *such a life*. Say, every one of you, in the words of our text, 'I will behold thy face in righteousness: I will believe on thee—I will put my confidence in thy love and mercy; but it shall be in the way of *righteousness*; in all holiness and purity of heart and life.' Then you will continue to behold more of the Lord's *love* and *truth*; his goodness will pass before you, and you will rejoice in the God of your salvation. If there are any men upon earth who can say they behold the face of Jehovah, I am sure those who are the living members of the

Lord's

Lord's new church may say so; inasmuch as his *goodness, truth, and love* are now manifested in a degree far beyond what ages past have known; the internal spiritual sense of his holy word being revealed and opened—in and by which the Lord is seen and known in the light of heaven. And, I trust, every one thus favored will say, in the language of our text, ‘I will behold thy face in righteousness: I will manifest my *gratitude and love* to thee, my God and Saviour, for these superior mercies, by departing from all known evil in heart and life—by loving my neighbour as myself, and by walking in all thy ordinances and commandments with an upright and sincere mind.’ To you, my brethren, it belongs so to live; and if you are the *true subjects* of the Lord's kingdom, *such*, I know, your life will be; and such a life, from such principles, will soon bring you to heaven, and make you angels there.

—We proceed, in the second place, to consider the good man's expectation of, and confidence in, future happiness, signified by these words—“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, in thy likeness.”

To awake, has various significations in the holy word, according to the subject with which it is connected. Sometimes it signifies, to arise from unbelief and evil—“Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” At other times it signifies, to be *enlightened and informed*—but, in our text, it signifies

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RESURRECTION. Death is frequently called a *SLEEP*, as you well know ; and, therefore, to arise from death, is to *AWAKE*. But why is death called a sleep? Not, as some imagine, because the soul sleeps with the body in the dust of the earth, 'till the resurrection of the body, hundreds or thousands of years to come. No, sirs, the soul knows nothing of such a sleep as this—nor the body of any such *resurrection* ;—but these subjects I am not going to discuss now. To *awake* is to *arise*, or it is the resuscitation of the soul from the body at *death*. The body returns to the dust, and the spirit to God who gave it. Death, to the good man, is only a continuation of life. His body dies—he puts off his flesh and blood—from this his soul, or spiritual body, is raised by the divine power of Jehovah—the *man*, the *true substantial living man*, appears in the spiritual world, a spiritual being, an immortal spirit, to die no more—thus he awakes to *life*, to *spiritual, heavenly, eternal life* (if a good man).—Why should the real christian have such *gloomy* and *dreadful* ideas about death? Why, because *men* (not the *word*) have represented death in such a strange, melancholly, and *unscriptural* manner ; as though, when we die, we are either to sleep in the dust, fly in the air, or be no more real and living men till the resurrection of the body, thousands of years to come.

These false ideas cast an awful, impenetrable gloom, upon a dying hour. But, sirs, they are
false

false ideas, unscriptural ones; and, therefore, let us banish them from the mind. *Death* (except, indeed, the *short pain* of dying, and our *attachments to kindred and friends*) is, to a good man, the *most desirable event*. It is *awaking* from sleep, *arising to life and immortality*—leaving this world for one infinitely better—and appearing in the spiritual eternal world a real, proper, substantial, and spiritual man, capable of enjoying the Lord, and all the beatitudes of heaven, through all eternity?—Who, then, would be afraid to die?—What good man can be *alarmed and terrified* at the thought of death?—Who would be afraid to exchange bondage for liberty—a prison for a palace—a short life of uncertainty and trouble, for an eternal life of peace, honor, and felicity?

Let us, then, entertain different views of death. We lose nothing by it but what is *disagreeable*—we gain every thing by it that is *agreeable, pleasing, and happy*. In fine, it is no more than passing out of this world into the next—out of a natural world, into a spiritual and eternal one. We shall be satisfied, when we awake, in his likeness. *TO AWAKE*, then, is to *rise* from death, and appear in the eternal world.

Let us, secondly, consider, What is implied by awaking in, or with, the *likeness* of the Lord.

You will remember it is said in Genesis, that “God created man in his *own image and likeness*”—you all know that man is a fallen, depraved, and de-
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filed sinner; that he must be born again, or regenerated, before he can be happy; and that when he is regenerated, he is then restored to the *divine image and likeness*. To open these subjects fully, would take up much more time than we can devote to one discourse; but I would observe, that an *image* respects the Lord, as to divine wisdom or truth, and a *likeness* respects the Lord, as to divine love or goodness. Therefore the spiritual man, who is principled in a sound faith, or in the love of truth, is an *image* of the Lord; and the celestial man, who is principled in pure love to the Lord, and in charity, is a *likeness* of the Lord. Hence we shall presently see what is meant by awaking, in the *likeness* of God. *God is love*—his nature, his essence, is *love*; he is the only source, origin, and fountain of all pure LOVE. *God is good*—he is the essence of all *goodness*; he is kind, merciful, compassionate—he is pure, holy, and perfect.

Now the good man says, in our text, “I shall “be satisfied, when I awake, in thy *likeness* ;” that is, when I am *like thee*. To be like him, is to become a form of *love*; to love the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. *God is good*—to be like him, is to become a form of *goodness*; to delight in all that is good and heavenly. *God is pure*—to be like him, is to be *pure in heart*, pure in thought and desire, in will and affection, in life and conduct. *God is kind, merciful, and compassionate*—to be like him,

him, is to be *kind to all*; full of mercy, pity, tenderness, and compassion, towards all mankind, whoever they are, and whatever they are; to breathe nothing but love, good-will, and tenderness towards them. *God is holy*—to be like him, is to hate whatever is evil, false, impure, and contrary to his nature and laws. God being love, goodness, and truth, so he is eternally delighting therein, and manifesting those divine attributes to all his creatures, in numberless ways and methods, according to his infinite wisdom. To be like him, is, therefore, to be continually delighting in whatever is good, true, and useful—to have our *life* in these things. All this, and much more, is included in being *like God*, or *awaking in his likeness*. THAT man, therefore, who is principled in pure love to God, charity to man; and from that principle is living a life of *goodness, purity, and use*—he is so far a *likeness* of his God; and, living and dying in this state, he will *awake in his likeness*.

But as it is said, “ I shall be *satisfied*, when I “ AWAKE, in thy likeness;” here is an implication that the good man will not be *fully satisfied* till that period arrives; and this may easily be accounted for and explained. The real christian’s desire is to be freed from all imperfection, ignorance, and evil.—While in this life he is advancing in that state, and going on to perfection; but, when he enters into the spiritual world, whatever *ignorance, darkness, or imperfection* remained, will presently be removed—he will

will stand a pure form of love and wisdom, goodness and truth—a *celestial angelic mind*, the likeness of his God and Saviour—and thus be *fully satisfied*. It is the state he has been aiming at, laboring for, anxiously desiring; and now, having obtained it, he is satisfied, easy, and happy.

But, thirdly, Why is such an one satisfied?

First, His highest wish, his most exalted expectations, are *now* accomplished. Love to the Lord, and goodness, were his *very life*; and he could not be fully satisfied until he wholly dwelt in the beams of that divine love, without an intervening cloud.

Methinks I hear every good man and woman now present, saying, 'I am resigned and content—ed to stay here, to dwell in this body so long as I can be useful to mankind; so long as I can contribute any thing to their happiness; so long as the Lord sees good for me to stay;—but I shall never be *fully satisfied* until I awake in the likeness of my God—until all my *darkness, error, evil, and impurity*, be removed, and I become a pure form of love and charity, wisdom and truth; until every intervening cloud be removed, and I am internally and externally *filled and surrounded* with the Divine beams of the Lord's love and wisdom. I shall not be satisfied 'till I am (like all the angels in heaven) nothing but *love, wisdom, and use*.'

But, secondly, Such an one will then be satisfied, as, being in the likeness of the Lord; because then he will be in eternal conjunction with him, dwell
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for ever in his immediate presence, and be completely filled with all heavenly and divine beatitudes from him; for becoming a pure form of love, wisdom, and use, the felicities thereof will be for ever enjoyed, and eternally increase. The good man will be *at home*, in his own *element*, among his own *friends*, and in the presence of that blessed and adorable Lord God and Saviour, who is the only object of his highest love, delight, and happiness.

Having thus explained to you the import of these blessed words; let us now apply them to our own minds.

Can you seriously and truly adopt the first part of them? 'AS FOR ME, I WILL behold thy face in righteousness. Whatever others do, or say, or however *they* may live, I will for my part look up to the Lord in faith and confidence, for every blessing and mercy; but I will do this in righteousness. While I believe on him, and expect every good from him, I will live a *righteous, upright, pious life*.'

Let us remember that we can never behold the face of Jehovah, either in this world or the next, if it be not in *righteousness*. For so far as we love him, and do his will, so far we TURN ourselves to the Lord; and so far we *behold his face*. And the more we are principled in love, truth, and goodness, the more fully will our minds be turned to the Lord; the more glorious will he appear to us—and the more happy shall we be.

But,

But, secondly, Do you wish to awake in his likeness? Is it your *one interrupted and ardent* desire, to appear like your Lord, when called into the eternal world? Do you think, if you then awake in his likeness, *pure forms of love and wisdom*, holy angelic minds, you shall be *satisfied*? Is this your highest wish, the happiness you want; namely, to be like your Lord? If so, my christian friends, I am sure you bear some *resemblance*, some *similitude*, of him now. You are men and women of love, charity, goodness; your internal man delights in righteousness—your external life is *good*—and you are going forward in that *renewal of the mind*, that *spiritual and divine regeneration*, which can alone transform you into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, your God and Saviour. If this be the case with you (and I hope it is) then you will in a little time behold the Lord indeed; you will see him as he is—be satisfied, and happy in his presence—and in that satisfaction and happiness, will you remain for ever and ever. While the wicked and ungodly will awake in the likeness of those infernals, with whom they have here associated, and cannot so much as bear to behold the divine beams of love and wisdom from the glorified humanity of the Lord—you will awake in his likeness, behold those divine beams, and live in them for ever—and be glorified, *celestial, happy angels*, in the kingdom of our God and Saviour. To whom be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

THE LOVE OF THE LORD JESUS,

AS

MANIFESTED IN OUR PARDON AND PURIFICATION.

REV. i. 5, 6.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to
him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.

THE words we have now read have been,
and still are, frequently made use of to confirm, not
only universal redemption; but *calvinism—justifica-
tion by faith alone—a plurality of persons in the
trinity—and several other sentiments*. And, indeed,
if we separate one part of the word from another,
and consider it in its unconnected and merely literal
sense, we may make it speak almost just what we
R please.

please. But this is not the way to form *right judgment*. If we would know the word aright, we must consider it in its regular series—its own divine connection—be acquainted with the corresponding figures used to express spiritual things—and endeavor to enter into the true spiritual meaning of it. By so doing, we shall come to a true knowledge of the sacred pages, and free our minds from error and false doctrine; especially if we look to the Lord for illumination, and search after truth from the love of it. The words of our text are replete with instruction and consolation to the real christian mind; and we will now endeavor to open them in the following order—

First, It will be expedient to consider the import of these words—"Unto him that hath loved us."

Secondly, What is meant by "his washing us from our sins in his own blood."

Thirdly, What we are to understand by being "made kings and priests unto God, and his father." And,

Fourthly, A word or two as to that glory and dominion which are due to the Lord.

And, first, We are to consider the import of these words—"Him that hath loved us."

This is a subject so extensive, so boundless in its own nature, that all language fails in the description of it. The personage here spoken of, is, we know,

no

no other than the Lord Jesus, the only Jehovah, the God of angels and men. And I should think it impossible to form a just idea of his attributes, without connecting love therewith; because he is in himself the origin, essence, and fountain of all true love, and pure affection. His nature, his name, and his ways, are *love*. He created man in his own image and likeness—designed him for everlasting glory and honor—endowed him with the noblest faculties and powers—gave him a will and understanding by which he can know his God, love him, obey him, and be happy with him. Doubtless, then, God hath loved him—nay, the whole bible is a revelation of love, mercy, and goodness toward mankind; so that we must deny revelation, if we suppose that God loves not man.

But it is maintained by great numbers of professing christians, that although the Divine Being loves men, yet he does not love ALL MEN; and therefore it is said, in our text, "Unto him that loved *us*, and hath washed *us* from our sins, &c."—not the whole race of mankind, but a part of them only. To be sure this sentiment has gained much ground in our day, and many, very many, upright minds, may believe it; but, nevertheless, *that* does not prove *it is true*. I think we may say of such persons (if sincere and upright) that they have much better *hearts* than *heads*; or that their *will* is superior to their *understanding* in this particular instance: as I am persuaded they would, if in their

power, make salvation possible to all men, from a principle of charity towards them; notwithstanding they suppose God has not done this, though they must confess he could have done it if he had pleased. But, first, if we take the whole bible for our guide, if we form just ideas of the blessed God, we must be convinced that he *loves all his rational offspring*.

That Being who is *love itself*, cannot hate the work of his own hands. "He is good to all, and "his tender mercies are over all his works"—the gifts of his providence, and the bounties of his grace, are manifested to all mankind—he wills not the death of a sinner; but had rather that he would "turn from his wickedness, and live"—he gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man—he is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. But the misfortune is, that men have considered the Lord Jesus Christ as a Being distinct from the Father—that he came to appease the Father's wrath, satisfy his vindictive justice, and make an atonement for the sins of all for whom he died. Hence the Lord Jesus is represented not only as another God, but also as a God of a very different nature from that of the Father; viz. as a God of love and mercy to mankind—while the Father burned with wrath, vengeance, and fury. But these mistaken ideas vanish away in a moment, when we form just conceptions of God himself. When we come to see and know that God is *one* in one divine person—that the Lord
Jesus

Jesus Christ is that one God, the Father as to his divinity—the Son as to his humanity—and the Holy Spirit, as to his divine operation—that this God was in Christ, or the divinity in the humanity, *reconciling the world to himself*—that hereby he is a Redeemer and Saviour to all eternity—holds the hells in subjection, and has made salvation possible to all mankind.

Let us never imagine that God is full of *wrath*, *hatred*, and *fury*, towards any part of his rational creatures. It cannot be; for he is *love*, love in its *very essence*, and he can no more hate his creatures than he can love their evils. You will ask, ‘How then is it that his wrath, vengeance, and fury are so frequently mentioned in the holy word?’ The reason is very obvious and plain—because the Lord actually is all this to wicked men, although there is nothing of that kind in himself; for as wicked men are in the love of evil and falsehood, so that love is their life, and that life is an infernal life; consequently, the divine sphere of love and wisdom from the Lord appears to them as wrath and fury, because they cannot bear the heat and light thereof. The more that influx penetrates to them, the more their evils, falses, and abominations are laid open and manifest, and the more are they tormented; they supposing it is the Lord’s wrath or vengeance which torments them, whereas it is their own wrathful nature, their evil dispositions, their infernal lusts, their abominable wickedness, by

which they are tormented; the divine sphere of the Lord being all love and wisdom, goodness and truth. The wicked, therefore, are taught by the word, that so far from their being happy in and with the Lord, while in an evil life, there is nothing in him but what will appear to them as wrath and fury—from the direct opposition of their nature and life, to the nature and life of the Lord our God. To suppose, therefore, that wrath, fury, and vengeance, actually exist in the Divine Being, would be to suppose imperfection even in God himself—as such qualities and dispositions arise from an inverted infernal life, and belong not to the life of heaven, or the nature of the Divine Being. Of all the subjects the mind of man is capable of contemplating, the love of God is the highest, most consolatory, and animating; but even that *divine attribute* would lose much of its lustre and excellence, and afford the good man a much less degree of consolation, if it were not *universal* and *immutable*. If he had any just ground to believe it were *partial*, *confined*, and *mutable*, the pain and anxiety he would feel on behalf of his fellow men, would be nearly equal to the pleasure he might experience in the enjoyment of that love in himself—because every *good man* can but ardently desire the happiness of mankind in general: loving them as he loves himself, he is deeply interested in their welfare, and would bitterly lament if the divine benevolence, compassion, and goodness, extended

extended not unto them—and, indeed, this very disposition is an indubitable proof that the love of God is universal, that it extends to all mankind; because this unbounded charity in the christian's heart, must have its origin and source in the breast of the Divine Being—as we could never love our neighbour as we love ourselves, if we had not that principle from the God of love. And if we are inspired with that *affection*, that *universal philanthropy*, consequently that God who so inspires us, must possess it himself, and that in an infinitely higher degree than we can experience it. If any one of my hearers have been taught to think differently of the Lord—that his love is partial and limited—let me entreat you no longer to entertain a sentiment so dishonorable, and so contrary to the divine nature. Consult his holy word throughout—consider his various dispensations—the conduct of his providence—the nature of redemption—and your own perpetual experience of his favor and mercy; and you will be convinced that he is good to all—his tender mercies are over all his works—and that he can as soon cease to be God, as cease to love his rational offspring, the work of his own hands. For so long as we conceive of the Lord as a God of wrath and vengeance, partial in his favors, and withholding his love from the greater part of mankind; so long shall we dishonor his holy name, be under the influence of a contracted narrow spirit ourselves, and be very far from that noble, generous, bene-

volent mind, which is the true characteristic of the real christian, the loving child of God. But we will proceed to consider, in the

Second place, What is meant by the "Lord's
"washing us from our sins in his own blood."

This part of our text seems to have been as much mistaken as the other; the views men have of it, taking their rise either from *calvinism*, or *tritheism*, or from both united. However, we will first notice what is GENERALLY understood concerning it.

By the blood here mentioned, nothing more is understood than those drops of crimson hue, which, through the process of the Lord's sufferings, were spilt from his body. This is what christians in general understand by blood, when mentioned in the word. In consequence of which they will speak with peculiar energy of his sweating, as it were, drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane—of his bleeding temples, when the crown of thorns was placed there—of the wounds in his hands and feet by the nails—of his side which was opened by the spear, and the like—all which was *literally true*. It becomes us to remember those circumstances with the deepest gratitude, and to recollect, that our evils, with the evils of mankind universally, were the cause of those sufferings; that is to say, if men had not been in evil, the Lord Jesus had not suffered those things. But it is further believed, that
all

all the sins of those who believe on the Lord, are cleansed and washed away by that *very blood*—it is represented as a fountain of blood—and the veins of Jesus Christ as *still bleeding*. They say, in the language of some of their hymns,

There is a fount of crimson blood,
Sprung from the Saviour's veins;
And all that plunge beneath that flood,
Are cleans'd from all their stains.

Thus it is supposed, that the real blood spilt at Calvary, does, by its *virtue, efficacy, and merits*, wash away every sin, totally cleanse the polluted soul, and render him spotless before the throne of the Father. If you ask how this blood is applied, and the cleansing virtues of it enjoyed? They will tell you it is by *faith, simple faith, faith alone*; that is, a firm trust, confidence, and reliance on the blood and merits of Jesus Christ for pardon, salvation, and eternal life—and that whoever has *this faith*, his sins are all *pardoned*, blotted out, and washed away for ever. And this, they say, is the sense of our text—"Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

It is further believed, that all who thus believe on the Lord, and are thus washed in the blood of the Lamb, are without sin in the sight of God, *justified, and accepted*; inasmuch as that blood is supposed to have sufficient efficacy and merit in it, to fully atone for all the sins of all believers, satisfy
divine

divine justice, appease divine wrath, and entitle the believer to a throne in heaven.

All this, first, is commonly understood by the material blood of Jesus Christ; and it is imagined that his love, mercy, and redemption, cannot be sufficiently magnified and exalted in any other way. From this view of things we are obliged to differ—concluding that it is neither rational nor scriptural—that much more is meant by the blood of the Lord Jesus—and much more necessary to the cleansing, or washing away our sins. We are willing to exalt our blessed Lord in the highest possible manner, and to allow an infinite value to all that he did, or said, or suffered. We conceive it impossible that sins, which are of the mind, and are not material, can be cleansed or washed away by material blood; and that when our Lord says, “We must eat his flesh, and drink his blood,” something spiritual is meant, and not any thing natural or material. We consider the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus in a representative corresponding light—that they represent and correspond to certain spiritual things, which must be appropriated in order to the cleansing of iniquity. We believe that the blood of the Lord’s body, represented and corresponded to the divine truth of his divine wisdom; and the flesh of the Lord, to the divine good of his divine love. To eat the flesh of the Lord, is, therefore, to appropriate the good of his divine love; and to drink his blood, is to appropriate the truth of his divine wisdom—and by these

these we have eternal life. By the Lord's blood being spilt, and his flesh torn upon the cross, were represented what men had done to his truth and love—that they had falsified, perverted, and corrupted his word—that they had abused and rejected his love. Indeed, every part of the Lord's suffering and sacrifice corresponded to, and represented the prophanation of divine truth, and the adulteration and rejection of divine love. Wherever blood is mentioned in the holy word, it signifies, in a good sense, divine truth; and in a perverted sense, truth falsified and profaned: and to be washed from our sins in the blood of the Lord, is to be purified and cleansed from evil in the heart and life, by the power and influence of divine truth. Thus our Lord says, "Sanctify them through thy *truth*; thy word is truth." But in order to our being thus cleansed, truth must be *appropriated*; it must be received in the understanding, enter into the will, and, as a divine seed, spring up and bear the fruits of righteousness. Whoever, therefore, believes the truth, and obeys it, is by virtue thereof cleansed from iniquity; and by no other way can he be cleansed—for this is the *living water*, springing up into eternal life in all those who believe in it and obey it.

Proceed we thirdly, to notice what is meant by "being made Kings and Priests unto God, and his Father."

It

It is commonly understood, that by being made kings, those who are the Lord's people shall actually reign upon thrones in the heavenly world; but such persons have not considered, that if every good man and woman is to be a king and queen in heaven, there can be no subjects to reign over—and a king without subjects, is no king at all. By being made priests, it is supposed that we shall offer up holy, spiritual, and acceptable sacrifices to the Lord—and in this I see no impropriety. It is well known that the Lord is called king, in the word, and also priest; he is called king from his divine wisdom, and priest from his divine love; wherefore they who are in wisdom from the Lord, are called king's sons, and also kings; and they who are in love from the Lord, are called ministers and priests—for the love and wisdom in them is not from themselves, consequently not their own, but the Lord's. Hence it is that they are meant in the word by kings and priests; not that they are such—but that the Lord is such in them, and causeth them to be so called; hence it appears that by kings, which the Lord will make of those who are in wisdom from him, it is not to be understood that they will *be kings*, but that they will *be wise*; and by priests, are meant, such as are in the good of divine love. It is added, "*Unto God and his Father.*" By which words many have conceived that God the Father and the Lord Jesus are two distinct

distinct persons. But by God and Father, in the spiritual sense of the word, two persons are not understood; but, by *God* is understood the divinity, with respect to *wisdom*; and by *Father*, the divinity with respect to *love*. For there are two things in the Lord, divine wisdom and divine love, or divine truth and divine good. These two are understood in the Old Testament by God and Jehovah, and here, by God and the Father. Wherefore, by Jesus Christ making us kings and priests unto God and his Father, is signified, that they appear in his sight as images of his divine wisdom and his divine love, for in these two consists the image of God in men and angels; therefore, all those who are truly principled in wisdom and love, or truth and good, are kings and priests unto God, as they are images of his divine wisdom and love.

But we will conclude with a word or two concerning that glory and dominion which are due to the Lord.

You will observe it is said, “*Unto him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;*” which evidently is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. But it is well to be noted, that here his divine humanity is understood, and by God and Father his essential divinity; and, therefore, that he is God alone, and that all glory and dominion are due to him only. By glory is meant, divine majesty, and is predicated of his divine wisdom—by dominion is meant divine omnipotence,

nipotence, and is predicated of his divine love: Therefore the spiritual meaning is, that the Lord's divine love should have dominion over all our affections, desires, and thoughts—over all the powers of our minds—and that his divine wisdom should be glorified in all our works, words, and conduct, through life and for ever.

When we surrender all the powers of our minds to the influence of heavenly love, then we ascribe dominion to the Lord; he becomes the supreme object of our love, our service, and adoration. And when we give up the understanding wholly to the influence of divine truth, then we give glory to the Lord, by a regular, upright, spiritual, and holy life, conversation, and conduct. And thus the Lord is all in all; the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Almighty, Redeemer, Regenerator, and Saviour of our souls—to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

PURE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN HEART AND LIFE RECOMMENDED.

ISAIAH lx. 21.

Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

FELLOW CHRISTIANS,

I AM going to address you this evening upon subjects of INFINITE MOMENT—upon subjects which equally concern every one of you. Neither the profession you may make, the society to which you belong, or your situation in life, can make these subjects either *less important*, or *less interesting*. It is an *indubitable truth*, that we are all to live for ever—eternity is very near us—the hour is at hand when

when the accounts of this life must be settled—when we must severally appear before the supreme, all-wise, and holy Jehovah—pass the solemn decision of an impartial judge—and be destinated to everlasting sorrow and shame, or to eternal honor, joy, and felicity. If you reflect but a moment, you are *immediately* convinced these things are at hand. The less we think of them, the less are we prepared to meet them, and the more awful will our situation be when they arrive.

One principal part of a minister's duty is to GIVE WARNING—to remind his fellow men of what is near at hand—to bring to their remembrance what we are all *too prone* to forget. When I consider how uncertain it is whether those who hear me now will ever have it in their power to hear me, or any other person, again—when I reflect, that perhaps I may never more be permitted to open my mouth again in public, or give one more warning to any person whatever—and that, *upon a CERTAINTY*, I KNOW it will not be long before everlasting silence rests upon my tongue—I am then struck with the IMPORTANCE of every opportunity—the EVENTS that may depend upon it—and the NECESSITY of being FAITHFUL.

It is a certain truth, that *eternity itself* will not find us a work to do so GREAT, as that which we have to accomplish in this SHORT SPAN OF TIME; nay, *whatever* we have to DO or to ENJOY, through a boundless eternity, entirely depends upon that
work

work which is to be done IN TIME. What I mean, is, the CONVERSION OF THE SOUL TO GOD—a PREPARATION for an eternal world of superlative felicity and honor. If that work be not done *here*, so few as our days are, *eternity itself cannot effect it*. Our divine teacher, our BEST friend, our INFINITELY LOVING Saviour and God, hath plainly informed us of this truth, in his holy word, “Except ye be “born again, ye CANNOT enter into the kingdom of God.”—And I presume there is not one person here who is disposed to doubt the truth of our Lord’s declaration. But be it farther observed, the Lord hath not only given us this information, but he hath also as plainly told us, in what that *new-birth consists*—WHAT is the *preparation* necessary for the enjoyment of the heavenly world. The words of our text, also, intimate what is to be done, and what we are to be, in order to such a state of endless felicity.

Permit me, therefore, in speaking from it, to be *in earnest with your souls*—to address you as immortals, just upon the *verge of eternity*, within a few days of that never-ending state which will assuredly be your lot in the next life; for it is more than *barely probable* that some one, or more, now present, may in the short space of a very few days, be an unbodied spirit in that world to which we are all so rapidly moving. Hear, then, what our text says concerning those who are the subjects of happiness. “Thy people *shall be all* RIGHTEOUS: they shall in-

“herit the land for ever, the branch of my planting,
“the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”

In speaking from these important words, I shall observe the following method, namely,

First, We will consider the nature and necessity of righteousness.

Secondly, What is to be understood by being the “branch and the work of the Lord’s hands.”

Thirdly, The duration of state mentioned in the words. And,

Fourthly, Notice in what respects the Lord is glorified by such people.

First, We are to consider the nature and necessity of righteousness.

I presume there are very few persons so ignorant as not to know, or so hardened as not to feel, the importance of being righteous; and I should hope there are but few who know not what righteousness means. To be righteous, is to be and do that which is right, from good principles, by just rules, and to a good end. There are two relations in which we stand necessary to be attended to upon this head.

First, Our relation to the Divine Being. We are his creatures, dependent upon him, accountable to him, and must be happy or miserable according as we regard or disregard him. We are all conscious the God who created us is infinite in power, in wisdom, and in truth; and we are equally conscious his

his laws are *right*, and *just*, and *good*. We also know that this Almighty Jehovah is infinite in love to his rational creatures, because he hath *redeemed them*, by taking upon himself our nature, and in that nature dying for our souls. Now, as standing in this relation to the Divine Being, it concerns us to consider what is *RIGHT* and what is *WRONG*. To do that which is wrong, is to act contrary to the *will*, the *laws*, and the *nature* of this God—and all that is *WICKEDNESS*; to do that which is *RIGHT*, is to act consistent with the *will*, *laws*, and *nature* of this God, and all that is *RIGHTEOUSNESS*. Now, as the *nature* of the Divine Being, yea, his very *essence*, is *love*—so the sum and substance of all his holy laws, is *LOVE* likewise. Hence it is that our Lord, when speaking of love to God and man, says, that “on these two hang all the law and the prophets”—that is, the substance of all that is contained in the word respecting the duty of man, is, that he love his God, and his neighbour. And the apostle says, “*Love* is the fulfilling of the law.” But it is a *plain*, though *melancholly* truth, that we have all departed from this pure love; and, consequently, from the very *essence of the righteous character*. We have indulged and cherished those *lusts*, *tempers*, and *dispositions*, which are of an *opposite*, an *infernal* kind; such as *self-love*, love of the world, pride, hatred, and enmity, and many other impure affections and desires; we have indulged ourselves in these, and to gratify them, have very repeatedly and very

constantly violated the divine and pure laws of love and truth, given us by our kind God and heavenly parent. This being actually the case with all mankind, in a more or less degree; and as such a state of mind and conduct of life are opposite to the nature, laws, and perfections of the Lord—so are they, in an equal degree, opposite to *our own* happiness. It being a *wicked, evil, and impure* state of mind, it *inevitably* deprives us of that *pleasure and felicity* which an immortal should enjoy, and which our blessed Creator and Redeemer intended for us. Hence, then, a CHANGE OR TURNING of the mind from these impure loves, these evil desires and practices, becomes *essentially* necessary; where this is truly done, there is true *repentance*—and when such a person reposes an humble confidence in the goodness and mercy of God his Redeemer, for pardon and salvation, this is *genuine faith*. This true repentance and faith, have their foundation in LOVE to God and goodness; and the soul is now in a disposition for an intire obedience to the divine will. This disposition, brought forth into practice, and manifested in the life, is called RIGHTEOUSNESS. Such a man loves God, and he obeys him—he loves his holy laws, and he keeps them—he loves his neighbour as himself, and he does him no injury, but all possible good. He is, therefore, a man of *faith, love, and uprightness*—he is a RIGHTEOUS man. I need not enlarge farther upon this part of our subject—what I have said, though short,
is,

is, I hope, PLAIN and JUST. You will, therefore, I trust, apply it to *your own states*—you will *seriously* and *faithfully* examine your own *hearts, affections, dispositions, and life*: and see whether or not they accord with the character of a *righteous man*. I desire you to do this—I *entreat* you to do it—I call upon you in the *name of the Lord* to do it. And that you may not neglect this important work, I will,

Secondly, Consider the NECESSITY for *this righteousness*.

First, This will appear, by reflecting a moment upon the nature of EVIL, or *unrighteousness*. It is this accursed thing which *imbitters all our sweets*, loads us with ten thousand *troubles and afflictions*, destroys all *peace, harmony, and order*; and, so far as it prevails, makes even this world a *hell*. All *unrighteousness* and *evil* are contrary to the very essence, nature, and laws, of a holy and good God. Iniquity of every kind *debases the man*—sinks him beneath his own dignity—and, so far as it takes place, defaces the image of heaven, and transforms him into an *infernal*.

But, secondly, The necessity of righteousness appears from the *nature of the soul*. Man is a spiritual being, an immortal mind, capable of *expanding* his mental faculties to all eternity. But all unrighteousness and iniquity *destroy* those powers, *prevent* their growth, and throw the whole mind

into *disorder, confusion, and misery*. As men, we are made in the *image and likeness* of God—we have a near relation to him; but in the same degree as we give into the love of what is evil and vile, in the same degree we deface that *image*, we *destroy* that *likeness*, and in the same proportion we *dissolve the relationship* between God and our souls. Now, if God himself be the essence of all that is good, pure, and happy; the *less* we are like him, and the more distant relation we bear to him, the *farther* we must be from happiness—the *greater* must be our *misery*.

Do you know, my christian friends, that God created man a *form of divine order*, a *likeness of himself*? And why did he so create him? Why, that he might be happy with his Maker, and that for ever. But this order is broken, this form defaced, this likeness destroyed by *unrighteousness*, by *evil*; the soul, therefore, of man, the *mind*, is not what it *first* was, what it *ought* to be, and what it *must* be, if ever happy. Therefore, a change must again take place, a *new creation*, a *restoration* of all the fallen depraved powers of the mind, that the man may be again like his God—united to him, and thus happy. In short, he must become a *righteous man*—"Thy people shall be all righteous; then they shall inherit the land for ever."

Once more, as God is *love, goodness, truth, and purity*—so likewise is *heaven*. Every angel is a form of *love and wisdom, goodness and truth* dwell in every

every heart, *purity and holiness* are displayed in every life; every thought, word, and deed, is *love*. How then is it possible for us to enter that kingdom, join with those celestial and holy inhabitants, and partake of their *unmixed, pure, and heavenly* beatitudes, if we are not righteous persons? Much more might be said to prove the necessity of sustaining this character, but I presume you are all convinced of its absolute importance, and, therefore, we will pass on. Only give me leave to *entreat*, that you will *suffer its importance to rest upon your minds*.

When we step into the other world, there is no alternative between *endless sorrow*, or *endless joy*—the infernal abodes, or angelic mansions, will be ours—and which of the two will be determined by ourselves. We are now determining the matter, for we are *preparing* for the one or the other—and which ever we prepare for, *that* we shall receive. Our state in the eternal world will not depend upon the *name* we bear, the *profession* we have made, or the *opinions* and *sentiments* we have entertained, any farther than those opinions and sentiments have influenced the affections and conduct; but our state will depend upon our *life here—what that has been*. By *life*, I mean our *interior life*—our love brought forth into act. If we live and die in the love of *evil*, that love is our very and essential *life*; and it cannot then be altered or taken away—we must remain in it for ever: consequently, where *evil* is

there we shall be—and that is with infernals in hell. For this reason it is that our Lord says, “Except ye be born again, ye *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God;” because the *essential life* of that kingdom is directly opposite to the life of the wicked man—for the life of all heaven, and every individual inhabitant, is *love to God and goodness*; and in that divine sphere of heavenly love the man of evil could not exist one day.

Excuse me, sirs, I must and I will labour all I can to convince you, that heaven and eternal felicity depend upon *the state*, the *real internal state* of your minds. If, then, we live and die in the love of God and goodness, that love will be *our essential life*, and it can never be altered or taken away; we shall eternally remain in it; consequently, where God and goodness are, *there* we shall be, and that is *with angels in heaven*.

Now, sirs, ask your souls these plain questions; I beg of you to do it *now*, and with as much earnestness as though they were to be decided in the eternal world the next hour. What is my *real and essential love*, my *true internal life*? Whither do my *affections* and my *conduct* tend? What *kingdom* is forming in my *soul*? Am I under the influence of evil loves? What are the *real* dispositions and desires of my mind? Am I a *righteous* or *unrighteous* person? Is my mind (under the love of evil) growing up into all the *impurity, depravity, and deformity* of an infernal spirit; or is it (under the influence of

of love to God and goodness) growing up into all the purity, perfection, and beauty of the angels in heaven? Am I, in short, assured that I am an heir of the eternal world of joy, and peace, and honor, from a *solid internal* conviction that the *love*, the *life*, and *essence of heaven*, now dwell in my heart? By making such inquiries as these, you will be enabled to judge of your own *real states*—and the more we are acquainted with them the better it will be for us.

Proceed we, in the second place, to consider what is implied in being “the branch of the Lord’s planting, and the work of his hands.” Under this head I shall be *very brief*. Our Lord himself, in the fifteenth chapter of John, explains what is meant by *branches*. As there he says, “*I am the vine; ye are the branches.*” By the Lord’s planting them, and their being the work of his hands, we are taught that whatever respects our salvation and happiness, that is of the *Lord alone*. So every man who is converted, or turned from the error of his ways, has ceased to do evil, and learnt to do well; and is become a righteous man: he is a branch of the Lord’s planting—he has been instructed by truth from the Lord—drawn by the love of the Lord—and by divine mercy is planted in the house of his God; he is the work of Jehovah’s hands. As we did not create ourselves at first, so neither can we create ourselves *anew*; but
as

as we give up our will and understanding to the divine influx of love and wisdom from the Lord, our darkness is dispelled, our evils are removed, our life is purified, our affections raised to the Lord and goodness, and we are successively transformed into the image and likeness of our God and Saviour. Thus our regeneration, salvation, and happiness from first to last, are of the Lord *alone*—he is the Alpha and Omega thereof—and to him alone be the praise! But,

Thirdly, As to the duration of the state mentioned in our text, namely, “They shall inherit the land for ever.” In the first and most general sense, the words respect the *last church* and *kingdom* of the Lord—and in that view the meaning is, that this church shall abide for ever—that it shall never be destroyed, decay, or come to an end. But, as relating to *individuals*, the meaning of the words is as follows, viz. That the truly righteous man shall inherit and possess for ever, all that is signified by *the land*. It may be explained by the words of Jesus Christ, Matt. xxv. and last verse, where he says, “The *righteous* shall go into *eternal life*.”

First, then, you will observe, that the righteous man is the *subject* of this *blessing*—and *heaven*, the *kingdom of God*, or *eternal life*, is the *blessing itself*. I shall not now attempt to describe the quality and nature of this kingdom; but as we all know it comprehends whatever is *desirable*, or that can make
happy,

happy, the idea of *eternal* being connected with it, must afford us a very peculiar and inexpressible consolation.

Here, whatever our enjoyments are (I mean as they respect this world) they are of short duration—they last but a very little time—they are quite *precarious* and *uncertain*. If we delight in wealth, we may enjoy it to-day, and before to-morrow's sun appears, it may have taken wing and be gone from us for ever. If the pleasures and amusements of life are our delight, they are equally uncertain and transient—old age and infirmities will soon put us out of a capacity for enjoyment; or if in youthful bloom and vigor, the iron hand of affliction may arrest us in the moment of pleasure, and confine us in an hour to the bed of pain and sorrow. If we aspire after honor, dignity, and esteem, the ascent is frequently very hard to gain; we labor long to obtain the fancied good—and, perhaps, the next hour we fall into disgrace, or our names are lost in oblivion. But if *wealth*, and *pleasure*, and *honor*, were all our own—if no one could deprive us of them—if they increased upon us every day—alas! how few those days must be! how soon the scythe of time cuts short our days. How quickly (and often unexpectedly) the cold hand of death *arrests* us—we leave the world, and all those enjoyments behind us *for ever*—and (if we have not laid up treasure in heaven) are poor and miserable indeed!

Not

Not so the righteous man—he shall inherit the land for ever. Here is *consolation* and *joy*, that the *pleasures*, the *honors*, and the *wealth* he has made choice of, are neither *mean*, nor *vile*, nor *uncertain*, nor *transient*. They are such as are *every way* suited to an immortal spirit, and they will last through *all eternity*. No moth can corrupt his pleasures, no thief can steal his joys.

You sincere and pious christians are perhaps sometimes *cast down*, and *uncomfortable*, through *temptations*, *trials*, and *evils* of various kinds. But why do not you recollect there is nothing here of long duration—that life is, as it were, but for a moment? And why do you not consider that your treasure is *within*, your joys *above*, and your felicity *eternal*? Do you love the Lord? Are you righteous persons? Are you living a life of faith, and truth, and charity? You shall inherit the *land for ever*. The kingdom is your own—you will presently die, *to die no more*. You will soon open your eyes upon a new scene of glory—upon a world infinitely superior to this, if this were even a paradise, and you lived in the garden of Eden. Why then are you not daily animated in the christian life—why do you not go on your way with unspeakable delight! I hope you do. You have every possible *reason* so to do; and I am sure it is the will of that God who loves us, that we should be cheerful and happy even *here*.

I confess,

I confess, the prospect of that blessed state, which belongs to the righteous man, very much exhilarates my soul—I am lost in gratitude and love when I consider (not *what it is*, for that I cannot fully do) but that it is *eternal*, will *never, never* end; but everlastingly *increase, improve, and abound*. Let us but be assured we are the *righteous people of the Lord*, only satisfy ourselves in that important matter, and then we need not want for consolation and joy. Have we connexions of *true friendship here*, which are as dear to us as life? There they will *continue, increase, and improve* for ever. Have we *mental enjoyments, spiritual pleasures here*? There they will unfold themselves under the divine beams of heaven's bright sun, and increase to all eternity—have we *relative* connexions here, *dearer than life*—dear as our very souls? There the ardent flame, the divine fire of love, will more intensely burn, and all celestial beatitudes accompany the pure affection. Do our hearts, while here, glow with love to that supreme and adorable *Lord Jehovah*, who is the essence of all that is *lovely, beautiful, and desirable*—who is *love itself*? There we shall behold his glory, gaze on his nameless perfections, be filled with his love, and approximate nearer and nearer to this centre of all felicity, joy, and honor, as eternal ages roll on. Yes, my christian friends, we shall inherit this heavenly land—this divine kingdom—this infinitely happy world for ever and ever.

And,

And, as I should fourthly observe, that the Lord our God "may be glorified." This head of discourse I must pass over with only observing, that our God will be glorified in our salvation, in our love, in our happiness; as the whole, from first to last, from beginning to end, is of his divine mercy and goodness to us his poor unworthy children.

Will you, then, my dear hearers, attend to these subjects with all that seriousness and affection with which I have laid them before you. Remember the Lord's people are *all righteous*. I do not ask whether you are methodists, presbyterians, of the old church or the new, or of what name; but are you *righteous people*? the righteous people of the Lord your God and Saviour?

I ask not whether your outward life be decent, moral, and just, although that is what ought to be—but whether your *internal life be righteous*? whether you truly *love the Lord*? your neighbour as yourselves? and delight in the holy laws of the word?—If this is not the state of your minds, in vain may you expect to be happy in heaven; that kingdom is a kingdom of *love and charity, truth and goodness, purity and peace*. The man of evil affections, sensual lusts, infernal dispositions, cannot enter there; he cannot live in that blessed world—therefore I hope none of you will deceive yourselves. I give you this warning, and I wish to warn myself, that we may not be *careless and indif-*
ferent

ferent upon subjects of such infinite moment. If you are sensible that this life is very short, that your souls are of infinite value, that eternity is at hand, and that eternal woe or everlasting joy depend upon your improvement of the present day, upon the *real state* of your minds; then I entreat you to consider seriously what can constitute you miserable or happy through an endless eternity. If any one of you should be disposed to remain under the dominion of evil loves and affections, and continue strangers to that change of heart and life, those pure principles of love and goodness which I have laid before you; I can only say, that I have so far done my duty, and am clear of your blood.

But if, on the other hand, you resolve in the name and strength of the Lord, to relinquish every evil; give up your hearts and lives to him in true faith, love, and obedience:—then I congratulate you upon the wise and prudent choice you have made. I wish to consider you as my fellow christians, whatever your name may be; and I hope so to live as to meet you in that blessed land, which we shall inherit for ever—there to partake with you of all the unutterable pleasures, pure joys, and sublime honors of that world, through the endless ages of one eternal day.

I have said, in the beginning of this discourse, that eternity is very near us; the hour is just at hand when we must settle the accounts of this life,
and

and be destinated to that state of happiness or misery in which we must abide for ever. Let us, therefore, take our blessed Lord's kind advice—
"Be ye also ready; for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

SERMON

SERMON XIX.

A SERIOUS PERSUASIVE

TO

HEAR, CONSIDER, AND OBEY THE WORD OF THE
LORD.

PSALM XLV. 10, 11.

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also
thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly
desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

THE psalms of David have always been
read, by serious christians, with much satisfaction,
pleasure, and profit; although they have only been
considered as chiefly relating to David himself, and
understood only in the literal sense. But in pro-
portion as their *true internal* meaning is known, and
that they chiefly relate to the Lord Jesus Christ, his
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conflicts, combats, victories, and the like; together with his church, and its enemies; they will be read with *still greater* pleasure and profit. Before we proceed to our text, we will just notice the spiritual sense of the psalm before us.

In the second verse it is declared that divine truth belongeth to the Lord alone—third to the fifth, that by divine truth he powerfully overcame the hells.—verse 6, that his kingdom is eternal—verse 7 and 8, that he made his human essence divine, whence heaven and the church are his, which are in divine truths from him—verse 9, that thence come the affections of truth, in which the heavenly societies are—verse 10, of the church where the word is; that it must recede from the affections of the natural man—verse 11, that so it will be the Lord's church—verse 12 to 14, and will possess knowledges of truth and good, with sciences subservient—verse 15, that thus there will be conjunction with the Lord—verse 16, that all primary truths are his—verse 17, that the universal church will serve the Lord.

These are the general things contained in this psalm, the particulars of which are *many*, and *very interesting*; but we will proceed to the words of our text—"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and
 "incline thine ear; forget also thine own people,
 "and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly
 "desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and
 "worship thou him."

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In the first place, you will observe, here is a solemn exhortation to attend *divine instruction*—to learn the will and word of the Lord—“*Hearken, consider, and incline thine ear.*” Let us dwell upon this a moment. The *importance* of hearing the Lord’s word must be evident to all; because that God who created us, on whom we depend, and to whom we are accountable, can alone teach and instruct us in whatever concerns our well being in time and eternity. If that God condescends to speak to us, we are bound in duty to hear him; if he hath revealed his will, that *will* we ought to acquaint ourselves with; and we cannot expect those persons to be *wise, religious, or happy*, who turn a deaf ear to the voice of the Lord—who do not attend his divine word. When we consider how few there are who read or hear the word—how *many* totally neglect it—we need not wonder that pure religion is so little seen. The holy word is the *mind* and *will* of the Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, delivered to men; to teach them the knowledge of himself, their own state, what they are to believe, what to do, how to live, and the way to be completely happy to all eternity. This word is given us from a God of infinite love and wisdom, in pure mercy and compassion, with this kind intention, namely, to bring us back to himself, that we may live in his blessed kingdom for ever. And this most kind and compassionate Father seeing how backward we are, how unwilling to acquaint our-

selves with those things which belong to our peace ; hath, in the most tender and affectionate manner, advised, beseeched, and exhorted us, over and over again, to hear him speak, attend his overtures of mercy, and become wise to salvation. We esteem ourselves the most highly favored and happy people in the world, because we are favored with divine revelation ; and yet, alas ! that *sacred book*, that *invaluable volume*, is seldom read, and little known. If we were to compare the number of those who attend religious worship, with those who do not, it is probable we should find that where one goes, twenty stay away. And were we to compare the number of those who read the bible for themselves, with those who *do not* read it ; I fear we should find a *hundred* neglect it, where *one* reads it. What can be the reason why the book of God is so much neglected ? Why, sirs, there are *many* reasons. Men love the *world* better than *heaven* ; *natural* things better than *spiritual* ones ; folly and evil prevail, the bible is an old book, and religion unfashionable. Many who read the word, would perhaps read it more ; but they say they cannot understand it—it is too mysterious—and they must leave it to their superiors, their teachers. That the word of God is, in itself, so mysterious that it cannot be understood, *I deny* ; but that it is made so by men, I readily grant.

The innumerable errors, false doctrines, traditions, and opinions, which have for many years been
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introduced, and maintained by the christian world, have actually thrown a *vail*, a *dark cloud*, over the bible—shaded the genuine truth from the sight—and caused it to appear as a most mysterious volume. That this would be the case, has been long foretold by the Lord; and also, that the time would come, in which those clouds should be removed and chased away. And it gives me unspeakable pleasure that I can, with confidence assert, *THAT TIME IS NOW COME*. The word of God is ever the same; but those errors and false doctrines, which have been advanced upon the letter of the word, and which have cast an impenetrable shade over truth, are now *detected*, *discovered*, and *done away*—the pure internal sense of divine truth opened—the science of correspondences revealed—the treasures of the bible laid open—and every one, who loves the Lord and his truth, may understand its sacred contents.

I allow, that a check has been put upon *free inquiry*—men have been prevented from studying the word, and becoming religious, for these two reasons, namely—first, they have observed that the christian world is *altogether divided*; that they cannot agree in sentiment, doctrine, or religion; that what one man maintains, another explodes; the religion one person sets up, another pulls down; that all is *strife*, *division*, *anarchy*, and *variance*. And, hereby, thinking minds are tempted to doubt the *truth*, and *reality* of *all their opinions* and *doctrines*.

And, secondly, those who are distinguished as the *most religious, pious, and good*—who are the *least exceptionable* in their character and conduct—and who are considered as the *best of christians*—these have discovered so much *gloominess, melancholly and sadness*—so much *reserve, unsociability, and stiffness*—so much *bigotry, enthusiasm, or singularity*—that men have been hereby led to conceive *religion* to be the most *disagreeable, forbidding, mortifying, and unhappy* life, it is possible for man to live in this world; whatever it may be in the next.

But, first, these two reasons need no longer prevent men from studying the word, or becoming religious; because the word of God is now opened in its *true spiritual meaning*—the vail is taken away—the Lord hath, by a messenger of his own choosing, dispersed the clouds of darkness and error, which have so long prevailed; he hath exhibited truth in its own genuine light, and native beauty. He is come himself to those who will receive him in his second appearing, as their God and Saviour; to whom he will, by the divine influx of his love and wisdom, open abundantly the truths of his holy word. And as I have always found that those *serious and christian minds*, who would *candidly* read the writings of our author, with a desire to know and receive the truth, have been convinced of the darkness, mistakes, and errors which abound, and have cordially acceded to the divine truth, now manifested from heaven. So I am confidently assured

sured you will, if you take the same steps, with the same candor and sincere desire, be as cordially convinced of, and as fully accede to, divine truth, as they have done.

You will then see that the bible is one consistent regular system; a *connected* series of *doctrines* and *truths*; a plain and solemn declaration of the divine will. You will then understand that all the false doctrines and opinions which men have embraced, have been founded upon the bare letter of the word, misunderstood; but that now, as mankind give up the mind to the Lord, receive the light of heaven, and enter into the true spiritual knowledge of the word, they will be united in *doctrine, faith, worship, affection, and life*. And, in the second place, that now religion will be exhibited in *its own native charms*—in its own divine excellence and glory;—not as a gloomy, melancholly, unsocial life—not as a haggard, forbidding, and disgusting *form*—but as a cheerful, happy, and social life—as the most beautiful, pleasing, and lovely form.

But, to return to the words of our text—“Hearken, O daughter, and consider; and incline “thine ear.” To *hearken*, signifies to *attend to, bear, and regard* the word of the Lord; to *consider*, implies *meditation and reflexion* upon the word—to consider whose word it is, what it contains, and the importance of its instructions; and to *incline the ear*, is to *obey the word*, delight in it, be

ruled by it, and govern the life according to it. These things need not be further explained, but to enforce them may not be improper.

First, then, my christian friends, let it be your care to attend the word, hear it, read it, and regard it; and think not that, because I have advised you to read the writings of our illuminated author, I thereby wish to divert your minds from the bible—no; God forbid! May my tongue ever rest in silence, rather than I should do that. My only reason, (if I know my own motives) is, that by reading those writings, you may *truly understand the word*, love it more than ever, and *obey* it from the heart. I am well convinced what the doctrines and inventions of men have done—that, like the Jews, they have set aside the word of God, and made it of none effect by their traditions—I am free to avow before the world, that these writings which I recommend, will *set aside those* traditions, make *them* of none effect, and thereby exhibit *the truth* in its own *divine light*, in its own divine power and efficacy.

I wish, my fellow christians, thus to behold the word of the Lord; and I do know, that as it comes to be *truly and spiritually* understood, it will lead us all into one regular system—into pure and undefiled religion—into *one faith and life*—and *unite* us all in *pure affection*—in *cordial love*. And I long to see the happy day when christians shall be of one heart and of one soul. The morning of that day appears—the sun of heaven arises, and it will ascend to
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its *meridian glory*; when its divine heat shall warm all our hearts, its heavenly light illumine our minds, and when we shall *learn war no more*, but sit down under the banner of our Lord, in *peace*, in *harmony*, and *love*—united in bonds of charity, truth, and goodness—and each making the other happy with all the powers of his soul. I well know that infernal spirits will, with all their subtilty and might, oppose the *progreſs of truth*, the increaſe of love, and the happineſs of men in theſe laſt days. But what then? The arm of the Lord of Hoſts will put them to flight! The ſet time to favor his Zion is come; yea, the Lord is come himſelf in power and great glory—his church ſhall ſtand and proſper—chriſtians ſhall be happy—and truth and love prevail.

Come, then, let us, according to our text, *conſider* the word of our Lord; meditate and reflect upon it; conſider whoſe word it is; that it is the *word* and *will* of the Lord—and conſequently that it muſt be ſpiritual and divine in every part—that it muſt be infinite in wiſdom and love—that its doctrines are true, its commandments juſt and good, and its promiſes ſure and immutable—that there is nothing *therein* but what is calculated for our real good and happineſs, to make us good men, good relations, good neighbours, good chriſtians, and bright angels in heaven. The *importance* of the word is *infinitely great*—without the bible we had wandered in the dark mazes of ignorance and folly; been as groſs idolaters as other nations; and
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known but little of God, of ourselves, or of an eternal state.

But, to pass on. The Lord requires us, in our text, not only to *hearken* and *consider*, but also to *incline the ear*. And when the true internal sense of the words is understood, here appears a beautiful and important gradation:—first, to *hear* the word; that is, to admit it into the understanding by hearing, reading, and the like:—then, secondly, to *consider*; that is, to weigh its importance, its value, its doctrines, laws, and precepts; to consider the author of the word, the nature of it, its design and end:—and then, thirdly, to *incline the ear*; that is, to *obey the word* from a full conviction that it is the truth of God, and also from a real love to it. All this is implied in the words.

Now, my good sirs, apply the words to yourselves for a moment; for the Lord our God speaks to ALL—he *invites*, *exhorts*, and *commands all* to attend his word. He says unto every one of you, “*Hear, read, and learn my word.*” It is no less than the Almighty himself who calls you to this work—the God who *created*, *redeemed*, and *blesse*s you—your Lord, your Friend, and your Father. And can you acquit yourselves to him if you do not read that word? if you do not acquaint yourselves with the contents of it?—Suppose we live a number of years in this world, and, when called away by death, we have not made the bible our study—we have not considered its value, nor attended to its injunctions;

tions; but have neglected it, laid it aside, seldom seen it, and more seldom read it with care and consideration: and suppose (as we justly may) that this question be put to us, viz. What regard have you paid to that divine message of love and mercy, truth and wisdom, *the bible*; which was sent down to you from heaven, to warn you against evil, teach you what is good and true, direct you in the paths of peace, and lead you from *sin, sorrow, and death*, to *goodness, joy, and endless life*?

What answer could we then make, if we had not received the offered mercy—if we had not amended our ways and our lives by its holy laws—if we had not followed its divine instructions, that we might be happy? Why, sirs, like the man without the wedding garment, we should be found speechless, self-condemned in our own consciences; and meet the just reward of our own *folly, ingratitude, and neglect*. And, O! what an *affront*, what an *insult* to the Divine Being, would it be to *neglect* and *disregard* that *wise, kind, and loving* message of divine truth, which he hath sent down from heaven, to instruct and lead us back to his own eternal kingdom—to his own bosom!!

Let me entreat you, sirs, *to read the word, consider the word, obey the word*. Read it as the word of the Lord your God—*consider it* as divine truth itself—*obey it* as the only way to be completely happy in time, and for ever!

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I know not why my mind is led to dwell so much upon this subject; it was not my intention when I began this discourse—but, I trust, you will receive the advice as coming from one, who not only most ardently desires your real and eternal welfare, but who *venerates*, who *values*, who *adores* the word of the Lord. If you judge of religion by its present appearance in the professing world, you will be *disgusted*; if you judge of the scriptures by the doctrines of men, your desires to know it will *not be sanguine*; but if you turn your minds to the Lord Jesus Christ alone, read the holy word as *his own word*, under his influence, with desire to *know the truth* and a *love for truth*—you will then see the scriptures in their own native excellence and beauty—you will consider them of infinite value—as a divine regular system of doctrine and truth—as an *infallible guide* to all that can make you happy in this world and the next—and as an unspeakably kind message of mercy, goodness, and love, from the Lord God our heavenly Father, to us his *mistaken, disobedient, wandering*, but *beloved* children!

You will then see religion in its own divine form—that it does not consist in a *set of notions*, a *round of external duties and ceremonies*, a *sect*, a *party*, or a *name*; but in *doing the will* of our heavenly Father from *faith* and *love*. You will be convinced that, so far from religion making us *sad, gloomy, or miserable*; it will make us *cheerful, serene, and sociable*—yea,

—yea, as happy as it is possible for human nature to be.

Why does the Lord call upon us, in our text, to “*hear, consider, and obey his word?* To forget our “own people, and our father’s house?” (which words we shall explain hereafter) Why, that we may be united to the King of Heaven; that he may desire our beauty—that is, that our *deformity*, our *impurities*, our *evils*, may be removed; our sensual propensities, our corrupt desires, our evil dispositions, may be done away; that we may be *amiable* in the *garments of truth*—*beautiful* in the *robes of virtue*—*lovely* in the *habits of religion and goodness*—that we may become *celestial forms of wisdom and love*—and worthy to inhabit *superb, glorious, eternal mansions* in the kingdom of heaven; and to stand in the presence of that Being who is the *perfection*, the *source*, and the *essence* of all that is *excellent, beautiful, and lovely*—“For he is thy Lord, “and worship thou him.” He is thy *Ruler*, thy *Governor*, thy *King*—obey his laws. He is thy *God*, thy *Creator*—do his will. He is thy *Redeemer*, thy *Saviour*, thy *Father*—love his holy name. He is the essence of all that is *grand and noble*; the *fountain of goodness and truth*; the *source of all wisdom, power, and love*; *worship thou him!*

How reasonable these injunctions! how wise these laws! how good these commands! where is the man who would not *worship, adore, and love,*
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such a being? Who would not study his word, and acquaint himself with such a God? He desires our beauty; that is to say, he wishes us to be happy—to stand beautiful, amiable, and lovely in virtue, goodness, and religion. And this he desires of us, because he loves us. To *his perfections* we can add nothing; his glory, honor, or happiness can receive *no addition* from the *service of ten thousand worlds*. Whatever of good, or beautiful, or lovely we possess, *that* we have from him; therefore the truth is, that the Lord our God desires not to *receive*, but to *give*—to impart to us of his own excellence, glory, and happiness. For this end he created us—for this end redeemed us—and for this end is he instructing us by his own holy word; that *by* him, and *in* the enjoyment of his love, we may, *with* him, be truly happy through the boundless ages of a never ending eternity.

To conclude, then (for I must leave the other part of our text to a future time) let me intreat your careful, serious, and constant attention to the voice and word of the Lord Jesus Christ, your God. Whatever you are strangers to, be not strangers to that message of truth and love—that divine revelation which God hath sent down from heaven. Seriously consider the end and design of your heavenly Father, in giving you his word, and requiring you to observe it; his design is no less than your own peace, happiness, and honor. He is thy
Lord

Lord, his holy laws obey; he is thy God, on him
thy soul depends; he is thy father, thou his child
beloved.

Be worthy of a parent so divine!
O! let it not be said, when call'd to stand
Before his presence, in another world,
He call'd you home—besought you to return
From folly, disobedience, shame, and death—
To *wisdom, duty, honor, endless life,*
With all the pity, tenderness, and love
A father feels—but you refus'd to hear;—
His calls rejected—disobey'd his word—
And sunk inglorious down to shades of woe.

No, rather, may we all his truth attend;
Own him our Lord, before his footstool bend—
Hear and obey his messages of love,
And hasten home to yonder world above!
In *honor, beauty, loveliness, divine;*
There vie with angels, and with angels shine,
In all the boundless joys of heaven live;
And share that bliss which God alone can give.

SERMON

SERMON XX.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEAUTY EXPLAINED.

PSALM xlv. 10, 11.

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

WE have, in our former discourse upon this text, endeavored to explain and enforce the first clause in the words, namely, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; and incline thine ear." In doing which, we have recommended a serious and constant attention to the *word of divine truth*, the bible; the knowledge of which is of the most essential importance. That the inhabitants of our land think it so, and desire to promote the knowledge thereof,

thereof, appears, I trust, in some good measure, from the establishment of *sunday schools*—a most laudable institution this, and I doubt not, will be extensively and lastingly useful to thousands and tens of thousands, of the lower classes among men. It deserves the warmest encouragement—a blessing will rest upon the heads of those who are zealous to promote it—and, I fear, a curse upon those poor parents, who neglect to send their children to be taught, when they have an opportunity so to do.

A want of education is one principal cause of that immorality and profaneness among the poor, so evident in our day. And whoever neglects the word of God, is unacquainted with divine revelation; let them be of what class in life they may, they can have but little pretensions to piety or religion—a *decent morality* is all they can boast. It is divine revelation alone which can acquaint us with the Most High, which can teach us the knowledge of ourselves, inform us of our duty to God and man, and lead us in the paths of peace and righteousness, to the kingdom of glory and joy. Great, then, is the misfortune of those who cannot read, or hear the word of God! Great is the guilt of those who can read and hear that word, but *will not*! and also of those who read and hear, but *will not obey* the word! And unspeakably great is the happiness of those who *can* and *do* read the word of God, *understand it*, and *truly obey* its divine commands! These are the persons who have

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attended to the advice given in our text—and such of you as answer this description, I congratulate as the *greatly desired* and highly beloved people of the Lord Jesus, your God and Saviour.

We will now proceed to open that part of the advice given in our text, which yet remains to be considered; namely—“Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.”

I would just remind you here, as I have before done, that the Almighty never requires us to turn our backs of, and forsake our parents, kindred, or families. Such a conduct is contrary to scripture, to reason, and to all good laws, divine, moral, or civil; therefore, the text before us does not mean, that we are to forget our own people *literally*, or our father’s house.

I can easily tell you what the words *people* and *father* correspond to, and spiritually signify; but not so easily, in one discourse, open the *science of correspondences*, by which the word is written. Suffice it to observe, that houses, families, and nations, signify, in the word, the good things of love, and of faith grounded in love; and herein an accurate distinction is always observed between *nations* and *people*. *Nations* signifying *good* or *evil* (according to the subject) but *people* signifying what is *true* or *false*; and this continually, without exception, through the word, as may appear from Isa. xi. 11, 12—ix. 2, 3—xxiv. 7—xliii. 9. Zeph. ii. 9. Zech. viii. 22, and many other places. Therefore, to

forget

forget our own people, nothing less is meant, than to give up and totally relinquish whatever is *false* and *erroneous* in the mind. Whatever is false, stands in direct opposition to divine truth, has a natural tendency to darken the understanding, and lead the mind to what is evil. There are many false principles upon which men act, by which they defeat their own intentions, and become miserable in that very road where they expected happiness. Such principles are the *love of self*, of the *world*, and of *evil*. Men, who are under the influence of such principles, are directed and led by a *false judgment*, a *perverted understanding*; and it is no easy matter to persuade them of their mistake—the evil is deep-rooted, the error has been long *contracted*, the love of the world and of evil commences very early, it strengthens with our strength, and grows with our growth; it is confirmed by example, and fostered by our passions—reason is not suffered to exert its power—a perverted love, and false judgment, bind it in chains. And we plainly see, that the hopes and expectations of thousands are founded on sand, depend upon a bubble in the air, a mere phantom. They are expecting happiness from the gratifications of self-love, the indulgence of the passions, and the pleasures of iniquity; but disappointment will ever attend their steps, and their journey end in despair. It is from these false principles, these deceitful pur-

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suits,

suits, we are called by the voice of mercy, in the words of our text—"Forget thine own people."

But, again; there are many false principles of a religious kind, false doctrines and errors, which we are called upon to forget and forsake. For every doctrine and sentiment which has not its foundation in truth, is of a *bad tendency*; it darkens the understanding, perverts the judgment, and influences the affections—and from these we are called by the text. Many of this kind might be named, if we had time; two or three of them we will mention—one is the doctrine of *more* Gods than *one*, or of three persons in the Godhead. This embarrasses the mind, confounds our reason, and prevents conjunction with the *true God*. This is a doctrine we are at this time peculiarly called to forsake; that "the King may greatly desire our beauty; that we may own him as our Lord, and worship him alone." For while we entertain an idea of more Gods, or persons, than one, our affections cannot be placed *upon*, and our worship directed *to*, the Lord Jesus Christ *alone*. Our *affections* and *worship* must be divided; and this is not acceptable to that God who says, "The Lord thy God is *one Lord*, and thou shalt love HIM with ALL thy heart."

Again, the idea that God is a Being of *wrath*, *vengeance*, *anger*, and the like, we are called upon to forsake and relinquish; for it is a *false one*, it is *one* of our OWN PEOPLE, and not a doctrine of heaven.

ven. God is love, goodness, truth, and mercy—amiable in all his attributes—lovely in all his characters and perfections; and when we behold him according to divine truth, we shall forget the particular fables belonging to this *general* notion. I mean, such as appeasing divine wrath, atoning divine justice, reconciling God to men; one person in the godhead dying to please and satisfy another; one God sheathing his sword of vengeance in the heart of another God, that the sins of men might be forgiven (or rather paid for) and their souls saved.

Let us forsake these notions, forget these horrid ideas, though they have been a part of our favorite system, though they have been as dear to us as our own people, family, or household.

Once more. The doctrine of justification by faith alone, imputed guilt, and imputed righteousness, let us forget them, that the King may desire our beauty. *Faith alone* is a *dead faith*—the imputation of the Lord's righteousness *impossible*—it is the righteousness of Jehovah, and would be next to blasphemy to *call it man's*. To be beautiful in the Lord's sight, we must love him with all the heart, as well as believe on him; we must (through the influence of his love and truth) *obey him*—live in true charity with mankind—and be *useful* in life by living a *good* life. By so doing, we forsake our *own* people; we forget our *false doctrines, principles, and errors*; and the understanding is given up to the

teachings and instructions of the Lord our God, by his holy word.

I cannot enumerate all those false doctrines, principles, errors, and notions, which we have made our own by confirmation and affection; but whatever they are, and however we may have valued them, yet we must forget them all, and be taught of the Lord alone, the fountain of wisdom and truth, if we would be acceptable in his sight.

Proceed we, secondly, to consider what is implied in "our father's house." Very much is contained in this expression; it involves in it a subject, which, I fear, I cannot fully discuss in one discourse. In the first place, by "father's house," is signified all *hereditary evil* in the mind. It is generally supposed that all the impurities of our nature, or our hereditary evil principles, come alone from Adam: but as men come to know who and what is meant by Adam and Eve, the absurdity of such a notion will be seen. Evil certainly was introduced by what we call Adam, but it has continually accumulated and increased; and every child receives its hereditary principles and evils from its immediate father—the *soul* being by *traduction*, or FROM the father. Therefore, by our "father's house," is meant, in the first place, all those *evil principles, propensities, and desires*, which have manifested themselves in our nature and life—such as self-love, love of the world, lust, sensuality, covetousness,

ousness, pride, anger, and many other disorderly and impure dispositions. That these are found in every man, more or less, I need only appeal to your own conviction and experience; that they are all contrary to the Divine Being, his kingdom, his word, and our own happiness, I am persuaded you will readily acknowledge; that they pollute and defile the soul, render us deformed and unlovely in the sight of God and of angels, you will not deny; that an indulgence of these evils, and a perseverance in them, will separate us for ever from heaven and happiness, reason and scripture plainly declare. These principles, propensities, and dispositions, therefore, we are desired by our text to forget, to depart from them, to abandon for ever.

But, secondly, "By our father's house," is signified all those *loves* or *affections*, which are of an *evil*, *impure*, and *infernal kind*; for *love* is the life of the mind, and may be called the parent or father of these evils, as they never become our own until we love them, and then they become *one* with our life. Therefore the love *of*, or affection *for*, whatever is evil and false, must be given up—for in vain would it be for us to forbear the commission of evils, if at the same time we *LOVE* them. To give them up through *fear*, *impotency*, *old age*, for *worldly interest*, or *human applause*, would not be to give them up, but to *conceal* them. But when all evils are hated as sins against God, as destructive to man, as beneath the dignity of an immortal spirit;

and from such principle we depart from evil, and learn to do well—then we “forget our own people, “and our father’s house.”

But, once more. You will remember that the Lord calls upon us to do this, that he may desire our *beauty*: hence we shall do well to consider what is our state prior to our obeying this command. All evil is of such a nature as to render *man unlovely, ugly, and deformed*; for it gives him a quality, a form, and appearance, opposite to the quality, form, and appearance of angels and of God: and hence it is that the wicked man is not only compared to, but really called in the word, a serpent, a fox, a dog, and the like. He is compared to the most savage animals, the most filthy reptiles, the most noxious herbs; nor is there one of all these existing in nature, however *vile, hurtful, and obnoxious*, but what corresponds to some evil in man—nay, what is more, they exist *from* those evils, nor would they ever have existed, *in those forms and qualities*, if evil had not taken place in man. The body of flesh and blood *is not the man*, nor are we to judge of his mind by the beauty or deformity of his body; but the soul *is the man*, and is either beautiful and lovely, or deformed and unlovely, according to the state he is in as to evil or good. An idea of this kind, it seems, has always prevailed amongst men, though the ground and origin of it may be little known: hence we observe how customary it is to paint and represent devils, or infernal spirits, in the most disgusting,

ing, monstrous, and ugly forms; but angels, or good spirits, in all the agreeable loveliness, the captivating appearances of youth, symmetry, and beauty.

Every man's *external* corresponds to, and is formed from his *internal* (by his external I do not mean the body of flesh and blood, but the *spiritual* body, or form of the soul), if, therefore, the internal, the mind, the will and affections be defiled, polluted, and infernal, by the love and practice of every evil and abomination; the external also will appear exactly corresponding thereto, monstrous, disgusting, and unlovely. We are, my christian friends, while in this world, *even now*, making up our *external forms* (as well as our *internal*) in which we shall appear for ever. If we are living in the love and practice of iniquity, indulging in pride, sensuality, lust, and the like, we are rendering our form and appearance as filthy, deformed, and ugly as those vices themselves are; and continuing in this state we shall, in the other world, appear in that horrid, monstrous form, to all around us; but if we are living in the love of God and goodness, a life of charity, faith, and use, we are rendering our internal and our external appearance as beautiful and lovely as those divine virtues are—in which amiable and beautiful form we shall all appear before the spotless angels, and inhabitants of the heavenly world. And whatever is about us, around
us,

us, or visible to us, will correspond in beauty and loveliness to our own blessed *state* and *appearance*, and nothing be seen or known there that is disgusting or unpleasing.

Having thus laid before you what is meant by “forgetting our own people, and our father’s house,” we will proceed to consider the *ground*, upon which this advice is founded; the *true cause* why we are required so to do; which is given us in these words—“So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.”

By the King, is here meant the Lord Jesus Christ; for he alone is our King—he is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Almighty. But be it remembered, that whatever beauty or excellence may exist in the creature, the Lord cannot desire *that* for *his own sake*; because he is himself the *source* and *fountain*, the *essence* and *fulness* of all that is lovely, excellent, and *desirable*. Therefore the words are to be understood as follows—that the *King of heaven* greatly desires us to turn away from, and forsake, all that is *false*, *evil*, and *infernal*—whatever would render us *unlovely* and *miserable for ever*—and that we would receive of him those graces and virtues, which will make us *amiable*, *beautiful*, and *happy* for ever; that so we may have conjunction with him, dwell in his presence, and enjoy his favor and love.

Time will not admit of our enlarging upon the odiousness of evil, and the beauty of goodness; but

but a few words shall be said upon the latter. —There are few in the world, I believe, so abandoned as not to acknowledge there is loveliness and beauty in *goodness*: to contrast *its excellences* with the *deformities* of *vice*, would be exceedingly proper, and you can at any time do that if you think good. In the mean time reflect upon a few truly good characters, upon some eminent virtues, and consider their excellence. Behold the *man of uprightness*—the man who would not commit an evil, or offend his God, though a *crown*, or a *world*, were the reward! Is not this man an amiable character in your estimation? Do not you admire *his virtue*, *his goodness*? Cannot you see in him *that* which is infinitely more beautiful and desirable, than any thing you can discover in the *unjust* character, the deceitful, or dishonest man? In him you see nothing amiable, his vices are detestable, his heart is base, and his form disgusting.

Again; view the man of *charity*—the man who loves his neighbor as he loves himself—who delights to do good, and be useful to all. Is not this an amiable person? Are not his virtues pleasing and lovely! Behold him visiting the melancholly abodes of *poverty*, *sorrow*, and *pain*; see him dissolving into tenderness and compassion over the miseries of his fellow creature! Notice his benevolent hand, stretched out liberally to relieve the mourning sons and daughters of affliction and woe. Behold
the

the widow and the orphan look up to him for help, and they look not in vain—the blessings of the fatherless children, and the disconsolate widowed female, follow him wherever he goes. He imitates his adorable Lord, in going about to do good; he delights to be useful to all, and the more happy he can make others, the more happy is he in himself. Say now, my christian friends, are not his virtues lovely? Is there not an unspeakable beauty in his character? Behold that *virtuous* female, whose life is *innocence*, *piety*, and *goodness*; virtue's soft form fits smiling in her countenance, *modesty* and *truth* attend her steps—tenderness and compassion, meekness and humility, dwell in her heart; *peace* and *tranquility*, *purity* and *love*, abide in her house; her virtue and goodness bless all who are around her, and her name is known to thousands. She exhibits the christian graces in their brightest excellence—her character is heavenly and celestial—and happy, unspeakably happy, is that woman in whom these virtues dwell.

Say, then, good sirs, can vice display such excellence? Can iniquity exhibit such charms? Can the *evil*, the *immoral* character, pretend to such beauty? No. Whatever is of that kind is deformed, ugly, and infernal—the wicked character need only be seen, to be hated—but *virtue*, *religion*, *goodness*, will for ever be amiable, eternally increase in beauty, and be the delight of God and man.

Let

Let me exhort you, then, in the words of our text, to “forget your own people, and your father’s house.” To give up every false principle—every evil in heart and life. Whatever is *evil* and *false* is *vile* and *infernal*—it renders us odious to God and man, deprives us of all peace, honor, and happiness, and ensures nothing less than *shame*, *death*, and *misery*. It is for this reason that the God of love, mercy, and goodness, calls upon us to give it all up—that we may become beautiful and lovely, honorable and happy.

Permit me again to remind you, that you are *now* forming your own *eternal state*—you are certainly making up your heaven or your hell. You are, if living in evil, filling that bitter cup which you must drink hereafter—you are, every step you take, preparing for, and going forward to, that state and situation in which you must eternally abide. But if you are living to God, a life of faith, love, charity, and goodness, you are making up your heaven—forming your soul into all the loveliness and beauty of angels—and every step you take preparing for, and going forward unto that happy, joyful, honorable state and situation in heaven, in which you will eternally continue. The beauty of the Lord your God is upon you—you will awake in his likeness—enjoy his presence—and be encircled with his love for ever and ever.

O could we see those spotless forms above ;
Those happy images of truth and love ;

Whose

Whose beauty, loveliness, and charms divine,
The splendor of ten thousand suns outshine!
O could we yonder glorious angels see,
Who once were men and women *here* as we:
But *now* arriv'd to heav'n's eternal land,
In all the glory of that kingdom stand!
How should we long such beauteous forms to bear,
Shine as they shine, and all their honor share!
'Tis in our pow'r—the King of heav'n invites
Each soul now here, to those supreme delights:
Our beauty he desires, and bids us prove
The nameless wonders of his boundless love.
May we in goodness and in truth abound,
Live well below—and then above be crown'd—
In *beauty, loveliness, and glory shine,*
And heav'n with all its joys be *yours and mine!*



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